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Edmund Wilson

More on the Dead Sea Scrolls

PROFESSOR Millar Burrows of the Yale Divinity School was resident director, in Jerusalem, of the American School of Oriental Research at the time —in February 1948—when specimens of the Dead Sea scrolls were brought in for examination. These were part of the first lot of manuscripts that had been found in a cave near the Dead Sea by Bedouins, and they had been bought by the Metropolitan Samuel of the Syrian Monastery of St. Mark, also in Jerusalem. Dr. Burrows has thus from the beginning been associated with these remarkable discoveries—believed to date from the first two pre-Christian centuries and the first part of the second A.D. century, the earliest Hebrew manuscripts known—and he edited the two volumes of the texts of the scrolls, published in New Haven in 1950 and 1951 by the American Schools of Oriental Research. The first of these volumes contained the manuscript of Isaiah and the commentary on the minor prophet Habakkuk, which evidently presents, in apocalyptic terms, a chapter in the history of a Jewish sect whose Manual of Discipline was also found and which has been identified with the Essenes, a kind of pre-Christian monastic order described by Josephus and other ancient writers.

Dr. Burrows has now written a book—*The Dead Sea Scrolls**—on this fascinating and complicated subject, which has so much excited the learned world and which seems to be having the effect of revolutionising theological history. This volume of over four hundred pages is an attempt at a popular account of the scrolls, the first comprehensive one, and an attempt that is notably successful. Dr. Burrows, though professionally a scholar, is the author of a number of books intended to be read by the layman, and he has set forth here in language that is lucid and plain, with no blotting of technical opacity, the whole astonishing story: the finding of the first and best-preserved group of manuscripts and their curious vicissitudes till, after having been first sold in two lots, they were eventually all brought together in the Hebrew University in Israeli Jerusalem; the subsequent discovery in other caves, in the cliffs along the Dead Sea, of some tens of thousands of fragments of what had evidently been a considerable library; and the unearthing of a stone ruin, the site of which corresponds with Pliny's location of the Essenes, between the caves and the shore—a large building, full of an equipment for living that includes writing-tables and inkwells, to the scholarly inmates of which the library must have belonged. It is assumed that this was hidden in the caves to save it from destruction by the Romans.

Dr. Burrows gives an account of the contents of the scrolls, so far as they have been deciphered, and explains the conclusions drawn from them; he reviews all the theories about them, including those with which he does not agree, and he summarises, entirely without animus, the sometimes

* A British edition will be published in the autumn by Secker and Warburg.

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acrimonious controversies to which these have given rise. This last is alone a considerable feat, since the literature of the subject is already enormous—his bibliography, selective though it is, runs to sixteen pages—and emanates from innumerable sources in the seminaries and universities, as well as from independent scholars, in many countries of Europe and the United States. What Dr. Burrows has really provided is an encyclopædia of the subject. You can find in his book an answer to almost any question connected with it, and it is not easy to use for reference only because it contains no index. The volume includes, also, full translations—by Dr. Burrows—of all this first group of manuscripts, with the exception of the two texts of Isaiah. The so-called "Thanksgiving Psalms" and "The War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness," the texts of which have only just been published by the Hebrew University in Israel, are given in English for the first time in anything like complete form. A considerable amount of material, in which lacunæ occur, has, however, been lopped away.

The "Thanksgiving Psalms" are here revealed as productions of high poetry and dignity. The prestige of the Biblical Psalms is so great and so long established that, as Dr. Burrows hints, it is difficult to arrive at an objective opinion as to whether or not these new ones are inferior. Dr. Burrows, in any case, has an excellent sense of style, and he has made of his rendering of them a literary work of distinction. These hymns, which seem all from the same hand, are thought by some scholars to have been composed by that Teacher of Righteousness who figures so conspicuously in the literature of the Dead Sea sect and who has been sometimes, most improbably, identified with Jesus but is more plausibly assumed to have been an heretical pre-Christian leader who fought both the orthodox priesthood and some foreign race of oppressors, probably the Romans; a leader who suffered persecution, and who perhaps died a martyr's death. Dr. Burrows does not believe that there is any substantial evidence for assuming that this Teacher of Righteousness was ever regarded as a Messiah. But, supposing he wrote these hymns, he does seem to become recognisable in them as a definite and an impressive personality, involved in some very tense conflict, which—sustained by an austere relation to God—he met with a dedicated fortitude. Compare these "Thanksgiving Psalms" with the apocryphal "Psalms of Solomon," which are also supposed by some to derive from the religious movement that the Dead Sea sect represented, and we are struck by what seems to be a difference between, in the case of the latter, the laments over backsliding and the menaces of God's vengeance of a more or less conventional Jewish writer and, in the case of the former, the disciplined expression of a self-contained and concentrated leader. In one remarkable poem (Number V), he compares himself to a pregnant woman, who, in pain and "the waves of death," gives birth at last "to a man-child, . . . a wonderful counsellor with his power."

It is only in his chapter on the relation of the scrolls to the writings of the New Testament that Dr. Burrows is unsatisfactory. His handling of this problem has confirmed the reviewer in his impression that it is difficult for the clergyman scholar—Dr. Burrows has been ordained as a Presbyterian minister—to face certain implications of the contents of the Dead Sea manuscripts. Dr. Burrows "confesses" to the reader with candour "that, after studying the Dead Sea scrolls for seven years, I do not find my understanding of the New Testament substantially affected. Its Jewish background is clearer and better understood, but its meaning has neither been changed nor significantly clarified. Perhaps I simply cannot see what is before my eyes. When visiting archæological excavations, I have sometimes been unable, with the utmost good will, to see things pointed out by the excavators. It is true that a trained eye can often see what is invisible to the uninitiated." But, he adds, "It is also true that scholars, being human, sometimes fail to distinguish between trained perception and uncritical imagination." The issue here, however, has

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never been as to whether the *meaning*—in the moral sense—of the New Testament has been affected. The scholars to whom Dr. Burrows refers have concluded from the unmistakable parallels between the literature of the Dead Sea sect and the writings of the New Testament—especially the Fourth Gospel—that both John the Baptist and Jesus must have had some connection with the sect; may perhaps have represented a final stage, when the exponents of the Essene doctrine had detached themselves from the brotherhood proper and were preaching its message in a wandering ministry. The fact that the sect of the Essenes is nowhere referred to in the New Testament, though the authors of the Gospels are acutely aware of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, is accounted for by Dr. Burrows by supposing that the authors of the Gospels had never heard of the Essene sect. But how could that have been possible? And how is it, then, that the authors of the Gospels are at such pains to mark the distinction between the followers of Jesus, on the one hand, and the Pharisees and the Sadducees, on the other? Josephus, of the first A.D. century, says specifically that these three groups — Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes—were in his lifetime the three principal Jewish sects, and by treating the last of them at greatest length, he seems to make it clear that the Essenes were more important than the others.

In an article in the *Christian Century* of August 17th, 1955, Dr. Frank M. Cross, Jr., of the McCormick Theological Seminary, in Chicago, who has been working on the scrolls in Jerusalem, has suggested that "the nonmention of the Essenes . . . arises not from ignorance but from lack of antipathy; we hear mention of the other Jewish parties largely in polemical passages, and in times of conflict." Or may it not be that the Christians had broken with the old Essene sect and did not want to acknowledge their indebtedness to it? It would have been one of those Jewish doctrinal feuds, in which the disciples of the new group will hear no name save that of their leader and this leader will accept no peer: "He who is not with me is against me," says Jesus. Dr. Cross has pointed out in another of his articles (*Christian Century*, August 24th) that there would seem to be some connection between "the emphasis on rank at the Essene banquet" and the scene of the Last Supper in Luke, in which the question of rank comes up, and the disciples are told by Jesus not to bother about it: "Rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves." If this is true, it is plain that Jesus is reacting against the Essene protocol. In asserting, as Dr. Burrows does, that "it is not necessary to suppose that any of the writers of the New Testament had ever heard of the particular sect that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls," he is making a detour of the problem as to whether Jesus and John the Baptist were not aware of the sect. How could they not have known about it? John's ministry and Jesus's baptism are supposed to have taken place at that same north-west corner of the Dead Sea where the Essenes lived, and, as we learn from Pliny, the headquarters of the Essenes was the only human habitation there. What were John and Jesus doing in that "wilderness" if they had no connection with the Essenes? It may be noted that Dr. Oscar Cullman of Basle, writing in the December 1955 issue of the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, arrives at the following conclusion: "We read in the Gospel of Luke that John lived in the desert of Judah before beginning to baptise (3:2). This desert was where the Essene cloister was located, with its caves. It is impossible to think that John could have been there without coming in contact with the sect. So we must assume that, without being a member, he was influenced by them, even if he went on to found an independent messianic movement. Thus a relationship may also be seen in his asceticism. The fact of John's origin in a priestly family should perhaps be mentioned, too, when we think of the importance of the priests in the life of the sect." And he points out that John's slogan from Isaiah, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," occurs several times in the "Manual of Discipline" of the Dead Sea sect.

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Dr. Burrows hurries through all this, becoming for the first time perfunctory, instead of indicating, as has been his habit, the arguments advanced for the various conjectures. He declares, for example, that it is "quite out of the question, as all competent historians now recognise," for either John the Baptist or Jesus to have been a member of the sect. But why? Who are these competent historians? What led them to their conclusions? He does not stop to tell us. He asserts that "in general, the sayings of Jesus are related to the apocalyptic literature of Judaism more closely than to anything in the scrolls." But a number of these apocalyptic works have turned up in the Dead Sea library, and there appear to be cross-references between them and the newly found documents supposed to have been written by the sect. How can they fail to be all related? And if Jesus was acquainted with the former, must he not have been acquainted with the latter?

Two other recent volumes should also be noted. These contain texts that have not before been published or have been published only in part, and are consequently of prime importance for the study of the Dead Sea scrolls. Professor E. L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University in Israel, who purchased the other half of the original batch of these scrolls, died in 1952, before he could finish his work on them. The texts, with his commentary in Hebrew, were published only in 1954. They were followed in 1955 with an edition for English readers—*The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University**—in which Sukenik's commentaries, though not the texts themselves, were translated. An interesting feature of this volume is a sequence of entries from Sukenik's diary in the midst of the Israeli war against the Arabs, with all its distractions and dangers, when he had just acquired the manuscripts and had come to realise their importance.

A first volume of the fragments found later in the other caves along the Dead Sea, which are now being sorted out and studied by a different set of scholars, in the Palestine Archæological Museum in Jordan, has been published this year by the Clarendon Press: *Discoveries in the Judæan Desert I: Qumran Cave I*, by D. Barthélemy, O.P., and J. T. Milik.* This contains the text of the fragments, with commentaries and translations in French, and papers on various aspects of these new discoveries, some in French and some in English. The fragments in this volume are from books of the Bible, known and unknown apocrypha, liturgical texts, hymns, and several so far unidentifiable documents. The most interesting item, however, and the only one of any length, is two heretofore missing columns of the "Manual of Discipline," found in the original cave after the main lot of manuscripts had been removed. These include a description of a ritual banquet at which a Messiah is present and at which bread and wine are blessed and eaten—by order of rank—by those who participate in it. This is the basis for making the connection to which I have referred above between the sacred banquets of the Essenes and the Gospel account of the Last Supper, with the rite of the Communion based on it.

Light is thrown on one bitterly debated point by a comparison of the "Introductory" chapter of the *Judæan Desert* volume, an account of the finding of the scrolls, by Mr. G. Lankester Harding, of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, with the parallel chapter, on "The First Discoveries," of the Millar Burrows book. It has been charged in Jordan that the Metropolitan Samuel failed to report the finding of the scrolls—as the antiquities laws required—to the Palestinian Department of Antiquities; that the men at the American School in Jerusalem connived with him in keeping the discoveries a secret; and that the Metropolitan, finally, with the encouragement of the American scholars, carried the manuscripts off to the United States, though they should not have been allowed to leave Palestine. Here is Mr. G. Lankester Harding on the subject: "During

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the whole of this time [between the finding of the scrolls and the departure of the Metropolitan for America], if anyone seriously thought of reporting the matter to the Government Department of Antiquities, the idea was apparently dismissed as sheer folly, for it was never done. The Archbishop's [the Metropolitan Samuel's] claim to have done so because he consulted a member of his flock who was assistant librarian at the Palestine Archæological Museum can be discounted, as the person in question had no competence to give judgment on antiquities of any kind, and even he did not think of reporting the matter to his superiors." And here is Professor Burrows: "During the course of the summer, Archbishop Samuel consulted several scholars and showed his scrolls to a number of visitors at the monastery, hoping to gain accurate information concerning the contents, age, and value of the manuscripts. The first person consulted seems to have been a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church, the late Stephan Hannah Stephan, a well-known Orientalist, who was then working with the Department of Antiquities of Palestine. He confidently pronounced the scrolls worthless. Since his special competence was in the field of Arab history rather than in Hebrew archæology or palæography, his judgment in this case can only be attributed to general scepticism. . . . Mistakenly regarding them as useless, he apparently did not think it worth while to make any report to the department concerning them. Two years later, Hamilton [then Director of the Palestinian Department of Antiquities] wrote to me that Stephan had never even mentioned the scrolls to him. He was told about them by Trever [another of the scholars at the American school], but at the time of their first conversation, Trever did not yet know that the scrolls had been discovered within the past year. Archbishop Samuel, with characteristic caution, had talked vaguely at first about the manuscripts as being in the library of their monastery, leaving the impression that they had been there for about forty years, and Trever was still under this impression when he first discussed the scrolls with Hamilton. Not until March 5th was he told that the scrolls had been found in a cave only about a year earlier. Soon thereafter this information was passed on to Mr. Hamilton. On March 20th Trever wrote to his wife: 'I have already talked with Hamilton at the Museum about the proper procedure. He has given me permission to visit the place to gather up any loose materials left.' On February 27th, the day before my return from Baghdad, Trever had spoken about the antiquities laws with the Archbishop, who consequently relinquished a plan to visit the cave and assured Trever that he 'would cooperate in every way possible with the American School of Oriental Research and the Department of Antiquities in carrying out the excavation of the cave.' "

The difference in the two accounts—Mr. Harding's and Dr. Burrows's—is thus mainly one of tone. Mr. Harding allows that the scrolls were shown to a scholar at the Palestine Museum, but declares—with a certain petulance, apparently directed at the Metropolitan Samuel—that this scholar was completely incompetent. The answer is so much the worse for the incompetent Department of Antiquities, which could not recognise its treasures when it saw them and carelessly waved them away. The grudge against the Americans seems mainly to be based on the fact that they appreciated the importance of the manuscripts. Dr. Burrows confirms the charge that he and Dr. Trever of the School recommended removing the scrolls from the Monastery of St. Mark. The monastery was being shelled, for the Arab war was in progress, and one of the monks was later killed. "The removal of the scrolls from the country, however, without an export licence . . . was illegal," Dr. Burrows adds. "How fully the Archbishop realised this I cannot say; I know only that we tried to tell him. He had already, of course, taken the scrolls to Syria and back." In the meantime, hell was popping; the Jews and the Arabs were fighting it out; there was little law left in Palestine. It does seem rather absurd that the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan should still maintain so hostile an attitude

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that the scrolls which were bought last year by the Hebrew University in Israel had actually to be transported in secret from the United States to Jerusalem, for fear the Jordanians would make an attempt to prevent their exportation by bringing a suit through the United Nations or blocking it in some other way. It is also absurd that, on this account, the Metropolitan Samuel—whom the Jordanians persist in regarding as a criminal —should be exiled from his monastery and prevented from performing his duties as a dignitary of the Syrian Jacobite Church.

One further matter of interest should be mentioned in connection with the volume of fragments. This includes a few meagre scraps from a commentary on the minor prophet Micah, and in one of them occurs a significant phrase: מטיף הכזב which has been translated "the Prophet of Untruth." This phrase had already appeared in the Habakkuk Commentary and in another of the Dead Sea documents. The person so designated has usually been identified with the subject of two similar phrases, the Man of Untruth and the Wicked Priest, that also occur in the manuscripts. If these all apply to the same man, he is an enemy, the antagonist, of the Teacher of Righteousness, and evidently a figure of importance. Now, the natural conclusion to draw is that what we have here are the remnants of another such chapter of the history of the sect as is contained in the Habakkuk Commentary. On top of this, an announcement was recently made that a third such commentary—on Nahum—had been pieced together from the fragments. This was said to be another instalment in the story of the Teacher of Righteousness and his opponent, the Wicked Priest (Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk follow in a sequence in the Bible); and it was rumoured that the document provided a key to the identity of certain of the historical characters not mentioned by their actual names in the manuscripts known hitherto.

In the meantime, Dr. John Allegro of Manchester University, who is known to have been working on the Nahum commentary, has made a series of BBC broadcasts, in which he definitely identifies the Wicked Priest as Alexander Jannæus, the hated priest-king of the Jews, who reigned from 103 to 76 B.C. Alexander was pelted with fruit at the festival of Tabernacles, and for punishment he crucified eight hundred Jews. These and other incidents mentioned by Dr. Allegro are to be found in the Jewish historian Josephus; but the identification of Alexander with the Wicked Priest of the Dead Sea sect appeared to be based on some new authority. Dr. Allegro believed that the members of the sect had been driven out of Jerusalem by Alexander, and he spoke of the strong probability—which seemed also to rest on some new document—of the Teacher of Righteousness, the head of the sect, having later been crucified by him.

Dr. Allegro is one of the group who has been working—under the general supervision of the Dominican archæologist Père Roland de Vaux—on the fragments in the Jordan museum. He is, I believe, at the present time, the only one of this group who has no religious commitments. Signs of nervousness had already been perceptible on the part of Catholic scholars, and now Dr. Allegro's broadcasts have been challenged—in a letter to the London *Times* of March 16th—by de Vaux and his other colleagues. They declare that there is not to be found, in any unpublished document, any evidence that the Teacher was crucified or that, as Allegro had asserted, Jesus, coming as a successor to the Teacher, "fitted into a well-defined messianic pattern." Dr. Allegro replied at length in *The Times* of March 20th. "Now," he writes, "as my colleagues are well aware, a newly discovered biblical commentary from Qumran not only offers some support for the Jannæus dating by certain historical allusions, but mentions this practice of crucifixion, or, as it says, 'hanging men up alive.'. . . Years ago it was suggested by scholars that the teacher was expected to rise again as priestly Messiah. Allusions gleaned from a number of unpublished fragments from the fourth cave seem to support this idea, and an article now in the course of preparation will lay most of the new mes-

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sianic material before scholars in the next few months."

This correspondence is of special importance because it finally brings into the open the hitherto covert conflict, in connection with the Dead Sea scrolls, between churchmen and secular scholars. Of the five signers of the letter from Jerusalem, four are Catholic priests, and, in effect, they repudiate Allegro, who now ranges himself explicitly by the side of Dupont-Sommer (without, he says, "following his views entirely"), the professor of Semitic languages and civilisations at the Sorbonne who sent shudders through the learned world by discovering in the Dead Sea texts the language and conceptions of Christian doctrine and a prefiguration of the rôle of Jesus.

NIGHT FANCIES

I call you come quick now and terrify
Myself with this high voice, a child in the dark
Alone with the roses on the wallpaper
In a tall house leaning inwards hushed at hark.

I send you a yell over departing incensed
Cloaked spectres of waves, but the water before
My face slaps up in my nostrils and I'm choked.
If I could reach the shore
Where you, my love, kick at pebbles, thinking of nothing
But pebbles and beaches forever about the land
And under your feet; you take one up and toss it
Away from you with the hand
That rocks my boat and rules me; if I could reach
That shore again, I should say nothing of how
I nearly drowned a moment ago, but grazed
Exhausted and coughing, smile up at you now
And hide my face in your lap. I would pretend
To be pretending: and you, would you also laugh
And pretend to console me with your hand in my hair?
Ah, would you be all kindness and only half
Confess it? We would walk back up the beach
And put some clothes on; we would wonder about
Our friends, and what was for supper; and we'd each
Guess different, and both be wrong no doubt.

I do not like to think of unlikely happiness
But cannot bear to despair of any at all,
Curled up like a child wound sound in these twisted bedclothes,
Pressing my cheek to your cheek, kissing the wall.

Oliver Bernard

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Ibusé Masuji

The Crazy Iris

[*TRANSLATOR'S NOTE:*— This is a story of Hiroshima, or rather it is a story told round Hiroshima. Hiroshima itself, and its ordeal, are no more than mentioned in passing. The air-raid described is that on a town one hundred miles away, and even this is only pictured indirectly, as the town is hidden by hills. Yet the terrible reality of Hiroshima and the atom-bomb pervades the story and colours all its incidents.

The Crazy Iris is loosely constructed and belongs to the *watakushi-shôsetsu* ("personal novel") tradition. It is, however, far from being a haphazard succession of semi-autobiographical incidents. A careful reading will reveal that the story has a definite pattern. Certain themes bind the incidents together: the destructive futility of war (the water-jar); its absurd and frequently comical aspects; its inefficiency, boredom, and futility (the expedition to fetch reserve-stores); its strangeness and freakishness (the symbol of the twisted iris). Throughout Ibusé evokes the contrast in war between great tragedy and the homely details of personal life. Ibusé Masuji (b. 1898) is a novelist of long standing who since the war has confirmed his position as one of the foremost men of Japanese letters. Some of his best works are historical novels (notably *Karasan Yashiki* in 1954), which by their nature are particularly inaccessible to Western readers. Fortunately his short stories are far more suitable for translation.—*Ivan Morris.*]

SHORTLY after Hiroshima was bombed, I was at a friend's house in the outskirts of Fukuyama looking at an iris which had flowered out of season. It grew alone and its blossoms were purple.

This was in the middle of August, some days after the Imperial Rescript of Surrender. Most of the irises were clustered at one end of the pond and already displayed their long, tonsured, bright-green pistils. But this belated plant grew somewhat apart from the others; out of its sharp leaves, which rose from the water, emerged a delicate stem and at the end of this, the twisted, purple blossoms. When first I caught sight of it from the window of my friend's house, I thought it was a piece of coloured tissue-paper floating on the pond. . . .

IT IS a hundred miles from Fukuyama to Hiroshima. At about noon on the day Hiroshima was bombed, I went for a walk through Fukuyama. Several of the shops were advertising bargain sales. On display was a motley collection of antique household articles at absurdly low prices: chests of drawers, mirror-stands, a ping-pong table, desks, table-ware, an antler, a bearskin. Outside the shutters of one shop were hung dozens of large mats with a sign, "These mats for sale. Thirty sen each." A huge Imari-ware flowerpot, tightly planted with palm-bamboos, bore the notice, "These palm-bamboos for sale. Price including pot: Eighty sen." A small organ was selling for five yen. A vase with a red plant was ten sen; three bamboo clothes-poles came to fifteen sen; a history of Japan in fourteen volumes was fourteen yen.

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"Hey, Masu, what are you up to?" I heard a voice behind me. "You weren't going to pass without stopping to see me!" It was the proprietor of the Yasuhara Pharmacy standing at the entrance of his shop in a white cotton shirt, hammer in hand. Mr. Yasuhara and I came from the same village, some seven miles outside Fukuyama, and we had been brought up together as children. He had moved to this town some twenty years before and now ran a large, well-stocked pharmacy.

We stood chatting in front of the shop.

"I'm having my last look at it all," I said. "I don't suppose there'll be much left after the bombers have been. You've seen those handbills the Americans dropped, haven't you? I suppose you'll be leaving here?"

"Yes, now that they've issued the evacuation order, I'll be clearing out as soon as I can get things into shape. But you know, Masu, they can't expect me to do it all in a few minutes."

Mr. Yasuhara turned towards his shop and continued nailing a wooden board to the door. According to the evacuation order, all householders were to board up their windows and doors against the effects of blast.

"I know we aren't supposed to grumble," said Mr. Yasuhara, "but I wish they'd tell us how we're meant to put up these wretched boards. I'll not get anywhere at this rate. There's not a single workman left in town and when I went to the ironmonger just now, there wasn't a nail in the shop. I've had to pull the nails out of my own floorboards and make do."

The complaints poured forth monotonously as he hammered away at his door. From inside the shop a clock struck twelve. Turning to me, Mr. Yasuhara said, "Did you know you had a fish-hook in your hat, Masu?" He reached out and removed the hook, which must have been there since I went fishing some days before.

"Well, I shan't keep you from your hammering any longer," I said. "I don't suppose there's all that much time for us to get out of here."

Next I called at the Kobayashi Inn, opposite the station, which I had known for over thirty years. During my student days I had always stayed there while travelling between Tokyo and my parents' home in the country, and since then I had made it my headquarters whenever I visited Fukuyama. In the courtyard behind the inn was an old plum-tree and at its roots an Ibé-ware water-jar. I remembered this jar standing in the same place ever since my schooldays. It was a dark clay jar about four feet high and glazed a vermilion in colour; on one side, six lines intersected each other in a pattern of noughts-and-crosses.

It was some time now since I had first asked the landlord to sell me the jar, but he had refused on the grounds that he might need it should the water-supply ever be cut off. There was something very attractive about this jar, but it wasn't until the landlord's refusal that I realised how much I had always wanted it. On my next visit to Fukuyama I again made an offer. This time the landlord declined, saying that the jar had been there ever since his father's day. When I mentioned the matter again some months later, he said he could not part with the jar as it was so beautiful in the rain. Since then I had frequently tried to buy it, though never with any real hope of success. But now that we were all to be evacuated, perhaps he would finally part with the jar, which still stood in its place under the plum-tree in the courtyard.

"That water-jar of yours," I said to the landlord. "What about letting me take it to my village for safe-keeping? I know where I can hire a cart for the day, so it will be quite easy for me to move it."

"I never heard that we had to evacuate our water-jars," said the landlord. "You don't really suppose they're going to bomb those, do you?" Then with an air of finality he added, "The only thing that's being evacuated from my inn is people."

THERE was a great crowd at the inn, all waiting for lunch, and the landlord and his assistants were rushing to and fro trying to accommodate them. The rooms

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upstairs were packed with people and even the annex was crowded. From snatches of conversation, I gathered that the down-trains on the Tokyo–Hiroshima line were being stopped at the next station and the passengers were being advised to get off at Fukuyama. "Even the railway people don't know what's holding the trains up," I heard the landlord tell one of his customers.

Two men in kimonos were sitting next to the entrance of the dining-room complaining about the increasing inefficiency of the State Railways. "They've got no right to push us around like this!" I heard one of them tell his companion. "I went up to the station-master himself and said, 'It's your duty to inform us why the Hiroshima trains are being held up.' And all he could say was, 'I don't know, sir, I don't know.' 'No doubt it's your aim in life to reduce your passengers to a state of nervous prostration,' I said to him." "You're quite right," said the other man. "They're a perfect disgrace, these State Railways."

I left the Kobayashi Inn and called at the nearby Hirai Dental Clinic, whose director had been a classmate of mine at middle school. Walking through the crowded waiting-room, I found him in his consulting-chamber. He was leaning forward with his elbow on a table and his chin resting in his hand.

"Well, well, Masu," he said as he saw me, "so they've finally ordered us to clear out. It's going to be quite a job for us here at the clinic, I can tell you." He threw an unhappy glance around the room. "And what do you suppose will happen to this old town of ours?"

"Oh, I expect the bombers will make a thorough job of it! What about all your medical equipment?"

"Yes indeed, what about it . . . ?" said the director vaguely.

At the other end of the consulting-chamber a couple of orderlies were silently attending to some patients. The director appeared to take no interest in them. Just a few days before, his only son, who had volunteered as a junior pilot, had been killed, and this news seemed to have taken all life out of him. I felt that if the air-raid siren were to sound this very moment, he would not take shelter but continue to stand there leaning on the table.

After my visit to the clinic, I left Fukuyama on foot, taking the road along the river. As I approached the bottom of the railway bridge, I noticed an emplacement with an anti-aircraft gun surrounded by sandbags. There was not a soldier in sight. The gun-barrel was pointing west towards Hiroshima. I sat down near the deserted emplacement and opened my lunch-box, and as I ate, I gazed at the sky around about. I had the feeling that at any moment an enemy plane would appear over the high hills. But no plane came.

HAD it not been for those hills, I might have seen the remains of the mush-room-cloud over Hiroshima. The inhabitants of Mihara, about seventy miles from Hiro-shima, clearly saw the cloud welling up in the blue sky; and the students in the Etashima Military Academy (at about the same distance from the city), who were doing their daily gymnastics, were hurled to the ground at the moment of the bombing. All the academy windows facing Hiroshima were shattered.

In fact I did not hear of the destruction of Hiroshima until about forty hours after the event. We in our village first learned what had happened indirectly from one of the vic-tims who had fled to the neighbouring vil-lage. He reported that some strange weapon had been exploded and that from one moment to another the city of Hiroshima had ceased to exist. The victim's name was Kobayashi. He had formerly been the prin-cipal of our own village school but had been promoted some years before to the post of director of one of the primary schools in Hiroshima. I knew him from my school-days, when he had been in the class ahead of me. He had been a reserved, modest boy. I remember how I had once caught the braid of my school uniform on a nail and he had got it off for me without tearing it.

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Rumours of Kobayashi's fate soon reached the village. We heard that on the day Hiroshima was bombed, he was giving lessons at the school. After class he went to his study, but just then there was an air-raid warning and he took shelter under his desk. Some minutes later the all-clear siren sounded. Kobayashi stood up. As it was very hot, he took off his coat and went over to the window. He was just removing his shirt when there was a tremendous flash in the sky and he felt the heat going right through his skin. There was a swishing sound and the earth trembled slightly. "The secret weapon!" he thought. He threw on his coat and ran out through the back gate. An empty lorry stood directly outside the school, and without thinking, Kobayashi scrambled into the back. An old man hurried out of the house opposite and climbed into the driver's seat. The lorry drove off.

Kobayashi had no idea where they were going. He lay silently in the back and before long he fainted. When he came to, he found that they had arrived at some town he did not recognise. He was aware of a peculiar pain throughout his body. Something told him that he was going to die. Whatever happened, he must make his way back to his home village and his family! He managed to get a ride on a lorry to Fukuyama and from there an army car took him home. He returned covered with blood. He immediately visited Dr. Tawa, the village doctor, but the latter had no idea how to treat him.

Two days after Hiroshima's destruction, Fukuyama was raided at night. I heard the planes coming over in endless droves. Later I climbed the hill behind the village and, standing next to a big rock called the Devil's Mortar, watched the glow of the burning town. As Fukuyama was hidden by other hills, I could not see the conflagration directly, but the whole side of one hill was bright with the reflection of the flames. At one place, a huge pillar of fire reared itself over the hill-crests. The castle tower must be alight. In a rift between the hills I could see that two large groups of houses outside the town had caught fire. The burning houses made small pin-pricks of light across the dark wide plain.

"What can those lights be over there?" I heard someone say. "They look like the flames the fishermen use at night."

Quite a few villagers had come up to watch the burning town. Most of them were silent, and in the dark I could not make out who they were.

"What on earth can those lights be?" the same voice repeated. But no one answered.

After a time, someone shouted from below, "Hey, is anyone up there from the Western Neighbourhood Association?" There was no reply. Again the person below shouted, "Hey, up there! All the vigilance-men from the Western Association are to assemble at once. We're going to Fukuyama to rescue the victims. Come on!"

A few people, who had been squatting by a pine-tree, stood up without a word and began scrambling down the hill. As they ran, they looked up nervously now and again at an American plane directly overhead. Its light moved back and forth between our village and Fukuyama; finally it disappeared in the distant black sky. I wondered if the plane had been in the line of fire of the anti-aircraft gun where I had eaten my box-lunch; the gun seemed to have been silent all evening.

Finally the pillar of fire disappeared from sight and the pin-pricks of light also vanished. I walked slowly down the hill. There had been something uncanny about this raid, which I had stood watching in silence without knowing what was really happening. At the time I had thought that there must be at least two hundred enemy planes, but it turned out that there had been only sixty. Yet about seventy per cent of the town had burned down; an incendiary bomb had entered the castle tower which, after blazing for several hours, had collapsed.

What would the next target be? This was a favourite subject for discussion in our village. By now almost all the cities and big towns on the Inland Sea had been raided. Hiroshima had been destroyed and before

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that Okayama; Imaji, some distance from the sea, had also been pulverised. Okayama, like Fukuyama, was bathed in incendiary bombs; Imaji and Amagasaki were attacked with high explosives. I remember how during the raid on Amagasaki we could feel the whole earth trembling, even though the town was at a considerable distance from our village. Perhaps because my house was next to a high stone wall, my wife and I were particularly aware of the tremors. We were listening at the time to an eye-witness account of the bombing on the radio and the combination of this direct description with the repeated tremors was quite nerve-racking.

As it happened, there were no more large-scale raids in our area. A week after the attack on Fukuyama, we heard on the radio of our surrender. That day the stomach-trouble from which I had been suffering intermittently became acute, and I decided to visit Dr. Tawa in the neighbouring village. I found him in a state of great agitation. It appeared that he was having an endless series of calls these days; no sooner had he returned from one round of visits than he would find a new list of patients requiring his immediate attention. All the young men in the area had been enrolled as volunteers and shortly before the attack on Hiroshima had been sent to the city to help in the evacuation. After the atom-bomb attack the survivors had made their way back to their villages, most of them horribly burnt or maimed. Even those who were superficially unscathed complained of peculiar pains throughout their bodies.

"It's a funny thing," Dr. Tawa told me. "They can't even tell me exactly where the pain is. All they can say is that it hurts terribly. I can't find anything specifically wrong with them. It must be some new type of illness we don't know anything about and I'm afraid medicine isn't going to do them any good."

As there was yet no medical term for this illness, Dr. Tawa provisionally referred to it as "the volunteers' illness" or "the illness with the peculiar pain." Compared to this illness, of course, my stomach-trouble counted for very little in his eyes.

Most of the victims of "the volunteers' illness" who were going to die did so within a fortnight. The local paper recommended cauterisation with the moxa as a cure. This treatment was used by almost everyone in our region who had been exposed to the atom-bomb; some people even used it after contact with the victims, believing the illness to be infectious. I do not know how effective the moxa was, but I heard people swear that it had saved their lives.

Many young men from my own village died that day at Hiroshima. Among them was the son of Mr. Yasuhara, the pharmacist, who had recently started school at Hiroshima. He was killed instantaneously. It was just at the time of the raid that I had stood chatting with his father outside the pharmacy and it occurred to me that at the very moment Mr. Yasuhara removed the fish-hook from my hat, his son must have dropped dead. There did not seem to be anything particularly ill-omened in the words, "Did you know you had a fish-hook in your hat?" I wondered what Mr. Yasuhara would feel should he ever remember them.

Two days later I went to Fukuyama to see the ruins of the castle tower. I had often read impressive descriptions of burnt towers in historical romances and I was curious to see one in reality. Yet when I reached the site of the castle, nothing remained of the great tower but anonymous heaps of earth and tiles. A few people were digging about in the debris with shovels of pieces of wood, searching for the nails that had supported the ancient wooden gargoyles. Some of the nails had been laid out by the side of the road. They were as big as fire-tongs.

Parts of the castle wall were still standing. The huge stones were covered with marks of burning and had turned to a dark clay colour. I could feel a warm wind blowing up from the bottom of the wall.

I walked slowly down the hill to the town itself, which was almost completely burnt. I visited the remains of the Kobayashi Inn opposite the gutted station. On the door was

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an evacuation notice giving the landlord's new address. The plum-tree in the courtyard had vanished without a trace. The Ibé-ware water-jar still stood there, but was cracked in two right down the middle. It had kept its lovely vermilion colour. I sat down on a charred stone and wrote a card to the landlord: "Dear Sir, I hasten to inform you of a lamentable state of affairs. I am writing this card sitting on a charred stone in the burnt ruins of your inn. The water-jar which we discussed the other day is broken clean in two. May I now take it to my house for safe-keeping? If you prefer, I shall buy it from you for the sum I mentioned. In any case, I am sure you will not want to leave it as it is. I hope you will seriously consider my request and find time to send me a reply as soon as possible. May I take advantage of this note to express my sympathy in your loss? Yours sincerely. . . ."

I intended to post the card on returning to my village, but suddenly changed my mind and threw it away. I was afraid the landlord might think it was written in fun.

The water-jar remained where it was for some time. When I went fishing in the beginning of October, I again visited the ruins of the inn and saw the jar still standing there in two pieces. But when I passed through Fukuyama later that month on my way to Iwakuni, I found that it had been pounded into fragments, together with the fallen bricks and debris.

On the train to Iwakuni, I thought about the jar and kept on composing different cards I might send the landlord: "Dear Sir, The image of that bygone water-jar haunts me incessantly. How transient, alas, the beauty of this world! Yours sincerely. . . ."

As the train rattled on, I felt more and more exasperated with the landlord. Why couldn't he at least let me have the jar for safe-keeping, even if he didn't want to sell it? My annoyance was aggravated by the fact that I had to stand all the way to Iwakuni, as the train was packed. Passing through Hiroshima, I tried to get a glimpse of the ruins, but could see nothing for the crowds that blocked the train windows. It was not until ten months later that I visited the city. I remember how impressed I was then to find that of all the trees in Hiroshima, the palms alone, though charred and twisted, had withstood the tremendous temperature of a year before and were now putting forth buds.

WITH the surrender, not only did my stomach-trouble continue to get worse but I began to suffer from insomnia. On the evening of the day I had visited the castle tower, a member of our Village Committee brought a notice to my house: "You will proceed to the school playground at Kamibé to receive your share of reserve stores. You will assemble at 5 a.m. tomorrow at the residence of the head of your Neighbourhood Association. If you have a lorry, wagon, or any other form of conveyance, you will bring it to the place of assembly. At least one member must report from each household."

I went to bed almost at once for fear of being late the following morning. But try as I might, sleep would not come. Indeed, I did not sleep a wink that night, and with bleary eyes and a dull head appeared at the designated spot at five o'clock next morning. In front of the house a few early arrivals were already kindling a fire and discussing the type of reserve stores which our village was likely to receive.

The Army had stored vast supplies in our district, evidently in the expectation of a prolonged war. They had used almost every conceivable storing-place: textile factories which had been forced to close down owing to lack of raw materials; breweries which had suspended operations following the Law Regulating Civilian Enterprises; granaries, soya-bean warehouses, wine-shops, farms, and even school buildings.

Here they had brought a mass of miscellaneous material whose possible value to the Army was often hard to fathom. In our village school, they had stored a sewing-machine in one classroom and huge rolls of paper in another; they had then locked and sealed the doors. In the meadow by the river they had piled rolls of paper in an immense pyramid

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and covered it with a waterproof tent. Another tent nearby sheltered a wheelbarrow. All private warehouses and storerooms in the area had been requisitioned. In our village the Army had used them for storing jars of wine; they had heaped the jars up to the ceilings, locked the doors and affixed the Army seals. Kamibé had apparently been the centre of the Army's storing operations and, according to rumour, the reason that the Americans had destroyed Fukuyama so thoroughly was that they had mistaken it for this nearby town.

Our village had only been able to assemble four wagons. At about six o'clock we set out for Kamibé, taking turns in pulling them. All the villages and hamlets in the three rural districts of our area had been ordered to collect supplies from Kamibé and the narrow country road was packed solidly with wagons, horse-carts, wheelbarrows and people. No effort had been made to regulate the traffic. Frequently we would meet groups coming in the opposite direction from Kamibé. Since it was impossible for the wagons and carts to pass each other, we had to lift them above our heads. The shouting and confusion at these moments had to be heard and seen to be believed.

Our group reached the school playground at eight o'clock in the morning, but was forced to wait there until five o'clock in the afternoon before receiving further instructions. After standing for some time in the broiling sun, I went and sat under a tree in the corner of the playground near the school building. In the playground were stacked enormous piles of paper-rolls, and sheets of paper the size of carpets. I do not know exactly what was in the school-house, but judging from the loads carried out by people who had gone inside to help themselves, the principal articles were clothing, farm tools, old magazines, and camouflage nets. The clothing consisted of blue shirts for soldiers and overcoats for officers. The blue shirts were in bundles about three to four feet high, loosely tied together with cord.

The shirts seemed to be the most popular booty for the people who went into the school-house to pilfer supplies. As they staggered out with their huge loads, other people standing near the entrance would snatch a couple of shirts from the top of the bundle. The man carrying the shirts couldn't do much about this without dropping his entire bundle. Shouting abuse, he would push his way slowly through the crowd. Then someone else would grab a few more shirts from him and while he was looking to see who it was, still another man would snatch a handful. In the end, the original thief would be left with only two or three shirts.

No one did anything to prevent the pilfering. There were three men outside the school building wearing the armbands of auxiliary Kempei military police, but they seemed quite at a loss as to whether or not they should interfere. They obviously did not know how much power, if any, they retained, now that Japan had surrendered. They have to pretend not to see anything, I thought to myself. At that moment one of the police went up to a man who had stolen a single shirt and snatched it from him. He made the man show him his papers and wrote something in a notebook.

"What do you blasted Kempei think you're doing?" someone shouted from the crowd. "Still trying to throw your weight about?"

A few others took up the cry: "Pretty stuck-up, aren't you?" "Remember, you've had your day now!"

Just then there was a sudden agitation among the crowd and lots of people ran and hid behind the wagons. I looked up. The sky was full of what seemed to be sparkling grey missiles flying about in all directions. For a moment I too felt panic; then I realised that they were just scraps of burning paper being blown about in the wind. It turned out that the employees of the District Office were burning part of the archives and were throwing them out of the window. Conditioned as we all were by the fear of air-raids, they had appeared to us like some terrible new weapon.

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AFTER we had waited for nine hours in the school playground, our group was ordered to proceed to the square in front of the main wine-shop of the town. Here again we waited. As I was sleepy, I sat down on one of the wagons and dozed off. When I awoke, it was already dark. We had eaten our box-lunches hours before. Hungry and exhausted, we waited in silence outside the wine-shop.

We had become accustomed to this sort of treatment during the war and it occurred to me that it was to become part of our lives in peacetime as well. Midnight had passed when we were moved to still another waiting-place, and by this time I was too tired to take in much that was happening. I remember that we all gathered by a wagon beside the road, joining groups from several other villages. One group loaded hundreds of sheets of paper on to horse-carts and then set off silently into the night.

After waiting another two hours, we were instructed to load one of our wagons with two paper-rolls and the other with printing-paper, blue shirts, uncut material for Army uniforms, and shovels. Then at last we were told to return home. Dawn was breaking as we entered the village before ours and, dizzy with exhaustion, I had fallen out of the ranks. A group from a distant mountain village passed as I stood by the side of the road. I noticed that all their carts were loaded with printing-ink. "What on earth do they expect us to do with this stuff?" one of the men said, looking in my direction with a weary smile.

Next day we were summoned to the village hall for the distribution of reserve stores. The tinned food, clothing, and shovels were equitably divided; the printing-paper was also shared out—so many sheets per family. The paper-rolls, however, presented some difficulty. After lengthy discussion, it was decided to divide one of the rolls, a job that was entrusted to the village carpenter. Instead of unrolling the paper and measuring off a number of equal lengths with a ruler, the man took a cleaver and hacked away at the full roll. The pieces of paper that emerged were mangled and of different sizes, those coming from the centre of the roll being, of course, much smaller. The Village Committee then called for a scale and distributed the paper by weight. The disposal of the second roll was left for future decision.

AS SOON as I knew of the surrender, I decided to return to Tokyo. It was about a week after the raid on Fukuyama that I visited my friend Mr. Masahiko Kiuchi, who had been evacuated from Tokyo at the same time as myself, to discuss plans. He was living with his wife in a small annex next to her parents' house on the outskirts of Fukuyama. Here I spent the night. From the first floor one could look out to the sea in the south and to the mountains in the west. Directly below the window was a pond. In the evening I played chess with my friend but soon became tired and went to bed, falling asleep instantly like so many insomniacs.

I awoke at early dawn, got up and opened the window. It was then that I saw a strange sight in the pond. I hurriedly fetched the bed-lamp and, extending the flex to the window, pointed it in the direction of the water. I took one look and turned out the light. I closed the window. What I had seen floating on the surface was a human body. The iris were clustered at one end of the pond and a few yards away was something that looked like a piece of purple tissue-paper. The body was floating on its back, one cheek almost touching the purple object.

I could not wait for the others to wake up and ran downstairs shouting for Mr. Kiuchi.

"Don't say you're awake already, Masu," I heard his wife's sleepy voice coming from their bedroom.

"I'll be right up," said Mr. Kiuchi.

I returned to my room and waited. A few minutes later he joined me in his pyjamas, seeming half asleep. "I'm sorry I had to wake you," I said, "but there's something terrible floating on the pond down there."

Kiuchi walked towards the window and then suddenly stopped. "No, I'd rather not see," he said. "There's no point in my looking. . . . Has someone drowned?"

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"Yes. You'll have to notify the police right away. I think it's a woman. I saw it just now when I was opening the window."

"All right. I'll go next door and phone for the police."

He ran downstairs and almost at once his wife came up.

"How awful!" she said. "Who can it be?"

"I don't know. I don't want to look again. It wasn't there yesterday afternoon. It must have come to the surface after dark."

"In that case, whoever it was, drowned a week ago. They say it takes a week for the body to start floating."

A week, I thought—so she must have been drowned the day Fukuyama was raided.

I was washing my face when my friend returned. "They'll be along right away," he said.

"Hey, Masahiko, are you sure it wasn't here yesterday?" we heard the voice of Mrs. Kiuchi's father from down below by the pond. My friend went up to the window but did not look out. "Yes, Father, I'm quite sure," he shouted. "Someone would have seen it. . . . I don't know how you can bear to stand there staring at it," he added.

"Did you know there was an iris in bloom?" the old man's voice came up. "It's amazing! Think of an iris blooming at this time of year! Here, have a look!" But Mr. Kiuchi still would not peer out of the window.

AFTER breakfast a police detective and a constable arrived. They took down a detailed statement from me and then examined the scene of the drowning, neither Kiuchi nor I accompanying them. When they returned to the house, they told us they had found a woman's sandal nearby. Perhaps, they said, the victim had been terrified by the air-raid and in a fit of hysteria run headlong from the town. Overcome by emotion, she may have leapt into the pond. Their examination of the body had revealed a burn on the cheek, which obviously lent credence to this theory. The girl was about twenty years old and was wearing an old nightgown tied with a red sash.

After the police had left, Mrs. Kiuchi heated a bath for me in the main house. As soon as I lay in the hot water, I fell asleep and it was afternoon before I awoke. Mr. Kiuchi had come in and was shaking me by the shoulders.

"Well, Masu, you can look at the pond now, if you like. The ambulance came for the body while you were asleep."

"Was it a murder or a suicide?" I asked.

"I gather she was a half-crazy girl. Her parents had sent her to Hiroshima to work in a factory and she was there when the atom-bomb exploded. She got back to Fukuyama the day it was bombed. This second raid seems to have been too much for her. She went clean off her rocker!"

Returning to my room, we both looked out of the window. The pond was a rectangle about a hundred yards across, with water flowing in from a stream at one end and pouring out into a small gully. At the mouth of the gulley was clustered the main group of irises; a few feet away grew the angular leaves from whose recess emerged the twisted stem with its belated, purple flowers. The petals looked hard and crinkly. No wonder I had mistaken them for tissue-paper.

"Do you think that iris was frightened into bloom?" I said.

"It's extraordinary," said Kiuchi. "I've never heard of an iris flowering this late. It must have gone crazy!"

Suddenly it came back to me. It may have been something I had once heard, or perhaps part of a story I had read. This iris it was that now brought the incident to my mind.

A young man—a writer I think he was—had lodgings in a house near Tokyo and from his window he could look out on a pond like this one. In a corner of the pond grew a cluster of iris in full bloom. Not far away stood a miserable hovel in which lived a young cabinet-maker and his younger sister. The girl was unmarried. She went away to work as a maid for some family and returned pregnant.

One morning, when the writer happened to look out of his window, he saw the girl

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floating face upwards on the pond near where the iris grew. She was wearing a beautiful kimono whose sleeves hovered on the surface of the water like the fins of a goldfish. When the cabinet-maker found his sister, he knelt down by the pond and stretched out his hand to her body. He took one of her arms and gently placed it over her swollen stomach; then he took her other arm and placed it on her stomach in the same way, so that one hand lay ceremoniously over the other and the wide sleeves covered her body. After this, he hurried away.

When I told Mr. Kiuchi this incident, he turned to me and said, "There's all the difference in the world, you know, between the iris in your story and the flower down there in the pond. They belong to completely different periods. The iris blooming in this pond is crazy and belongs to a crazy age!"

MAN DECLARED A TREASURE: A PSALM

Mr. Yamashiro-no-Shōjō is declared a Human National Treasure,
Mr. Yamashiro-no-Shōjō, the pinnacle of the puppet theatre,
the singing-bird of Osaka.
Sing too, all you young flower-sellers, and fortune-tellers,
You shoe-shines and hostesses, and other junior workers
around the cloaca.

And you, O taxi-drivers, beware how you take your pleasure.
If you run Mr. Yamashiro-no-Shōjō down, you will certainly
be frowned upon,
For Mr. Yamashiro-no-Shōjō is now a Human National Treasure.
Wild Siberian wind, be warned, and spare his golden tonsils.

O managers of cinemas with inadequate safety measures,
Study the queue for the shining face of Mr. Yamashiro-no-Shōjō,
Lead him away, for should this Human whom the Nation treasures
Fry among a hundred patrons, the papers might insinuate.

Take thought, you swift captains of over-loaded transports,
Deny a passage to Mr. Yamashiro-no-Shōjō, for should this
Precious body roll on the rough sea floor with a thousand
common escorts,
Someone might feel you had been a wee bit thoughtless.

Let Mr. Yamashiro-no-Shōjō be heard in the lanes of Tophet,
Let Mr. Yamashiro-no-Shōjō be honoured as a prophet.
Clap your hands, all you who suffer from the buffets
Of fate. For one of your fellows is prized as highly as
one of his puppets.

D. J. Enright

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Isaiah Berlin

A Marvellous Decade (IV)

Herzen and the Grand Inquisitors

ALEXANDER Herzen is the most arresting Russian political writer in the nineteenth century. No good biographies of him exist, perhaps because his own autobiography is a great literary masterpiece. It is not widely known in English-speaking countries, and that for no good reason, for it has been translated into English, the first part magnificently by Mr. J. D. Duff, and the whole adequately by Constance Garnett; unlike some works of political and literary genius, it is, even in translation, marvellously readable.

In some respects, it resembles Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* more than any other book. For it is not a collection of wholly personal memoirs and political reflections. It is an amalgam of personal detail, descriptions of political and social life in various countries, of opinions, personalities, outlooks, accounts of the author's youth and early manhood in Russia, historical essays, notes of journeys in Europe, France, Switzerland, Italy, of Paris and Rome during the revolutions of 1848 and 1849 (these last are incomparable, and the best personal documents about these events that we possess), discussions of political leaders, and of the aims and purposes of various parties. All this is interspersed with a variety of comment, pungent observation, sharp and spontaneous, occasionally malicious, vignettes of individuals, of the character of peoples, analyses of economic and social facts, discussions and epigrams about the future and past of Europe and about the author's own hopes and fears for Russia; and interwoven with this is a detailed and poignant account of Herzen's personal tragedy, perhaps the most extraordinary self-revelation on the part of a sensitive and fastidious man ever written down for the benefit of the general public.

Alexander Ivanovich Herzen was born in Moscow in 1812, not long before the capture of the city by Napoleon, the illegitimate son of Ivan Yakovlev, a rich and well-born Russian gentleman, descended from a cadet branch of the Romanoffs, a morose, difficult, possessive, distinguished and civilised man, who bullied his son, loved him deeply, embittered his life, and had an enormous influence upon him both by attraction and repulsion. His mother, Amalia Haag, was a mild German lady from Stuttgart in Württemberg, the daughter of a minor official. Ivan Yakovlev had met her while travelling abroad, but never married her. He took her to Moscow, established her as mistress of his household, and called his son Herzen in token, as it were, of the fact that he was the child of his heart, but not legitimately born and therefore not entitled to bear his name.

The fact that Herzen was not born in wedlock probably had a considerable effect on his character, and may have made him more rebellious than he might otherwise have been.

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He received the regular education of a rich young nobleman, went to the University of Moscow and there early asserted his vivid, original, impulsive character. He was born (in later years he constantly came back to this) into the generation of what in Russia came to be called *Lishniye Lyudi*, "superfluous men," with whom Turgenev's early novels are so largely concerned.

These young men have a place of their own in the history of European culture in the nineteenth century. They belonged to the class of those who are by birth aristocratic, but who themselves go over to some freer and more radical mode of thought and of action. There is something singularly attractive about men who retained, throughout life, the manners, the texture of being, the habits and style of a civilised and refined *milieu*. Such men exercise a peculiar kind of personal freedom which combines spontaneity with distinction. Their minds see large and generous horizons, and, above all, reveal a unique intellectual gaiety of a kind that aristocratic education tends to produce. At the same time, they are intellectually on the side of everything that is new, progressive, rebellious, young, untried, of that which is about to come into being, of the open sea whether or not there is land that lies beyond. To this type belong those intermediate figures, like Mirabeau, Charles James Fox, Franklin Roosevelt, who live near the frontier that divides old from new, between the *douceur de la vie* which is about to pass and the tantalising future, the dangerous new age that they themselves do much to bring into being.

HERZEN belonged to this *milieu*. In his autobiography he has described what it was like to be this kind of man in a suffocating society, where there was no opportunity of putting to use one's natural gifts, what it meant to be excited by novel ideas which came drifting in from all kinds of sources, from classical texts and the old utopias of the West, from French social preachers and German philosophers, from books, journals, casual conversations, only to remember that the *milieu* in which one lived made it absurd even to begin to dream of creating in one's own country those harmless and moderate institutions which had long become forms of life in the civilised West.

This normally led to one of two results: either the young enthusiast simply subsided, and came to terms with reality, and became a wistful, gently frustrated landowner, who lived on his estate, turned the pages of serious periodicals imported from Petersburg or abroad, and occasionally introduced new pieces of agricultural machinery or some other ingenious device which had caught his fancy in England or in France. Such enthusiasts would endlessly discuss the need for this or that change, but always with the melancholy implication that little or nothing could or would be done; or, alternatively, they would give in entirely and fall into a species of gloom or stupor or violent despair, becoming self-devouring neurotics, destructive personalities slowly poisoning both themselves and the life round them.

Herzen was resolved to escape from both these familiar predicaments. He was determined that of him, at any rate, nobody would say that he had done nothing in the world, that he had offered no resistance and collapsed. When he finally emigrated from Russia in 1847 it was to devote himself to a life of activity. His education was that of a dilettante. Like most young men brought up in an aristocratic *milieu*, he had been taught to be too many things to too many men, to reflect too many aspects of life, and situations, to be able to concentrate sufficiently upon any one particular activity, any one fixed design.

Herzen was well aware of this. He talks wistfully about the good fortune of those who enter peacefully upon some steady, fixed profession, untroubled by the many countless alternatives open to gifted and often idealistic young men who have been taught too much, are too rich, and are offered altogether too wide an opportunity of doing too many things, and who, consequently, begin, and are bored, and go back and start down a new path, and in the end lose their way and drift aimlessly and achieve nothing. This was a very characteristic piece of self-analysis; filled

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with the idealism of his generation in Russia that both sprang from and fed the growing sense of guilt towards "the people," Herzen was passionately anxious to do something memorable for himself and his country. This anxiety remained with him all his life. Driven by it he became, as everyone knows who has any acquaintance with the modern history of Russia, perhaps the greatest of European publicists of his day, and founded the first free—that is to say, anti-Czarist—Russian press in Europe, thereby laying the foundation of revolutionary agitation in his country.

In his most celebrated periodical, which he called *The Bell*, he dealt with anything that seemed to be of topical interest. He exposed, he denounced, he derided, he preached, he became a kind of Russian Voltaire of the mid-nineteenth century. He was a journalist of genius, and his articles, written with brilliance, gaiety, and passion, although, of course, officially forbidden, circulated in Russia and were read by radicals and conservatives alike. Indeed it was said that the Emperor himself read them; certainly some among his officials did so; during the heyday of his fame Herzen exercised a genuine influence within Russia itself—an unheard of phenomenon for an *émigré*—by exposing abuses, naming names, but, above all, by appealing to liberal sentiment which had not completely died, even at the very heart of the Czarist bureaucracy, at any rate during the fifties and sixties.

UNLIKE many who find themselves only on paper, or on a public platform, Herzen was an entrancing talker. Probably the best description of him is to be found in the book after which these lectures are named —*The Marvellous Decade*, by his friend Annenkov. It was written some twenty years after the events that it records.

I must own [Annenkov wrote] that I was puzzled and overwhelmed, when I first came to know Herzen—by this extraordinary mind which darted from one topic to another with unbelievable swiftness, with inexhaustible wit and brilliance; which could see in the turn of somebody's talk, in some simple incident, in some abstract idea, that vivid feature which gives expression and life. He had a most astonishing capacity for instantaneous, unexpected juxtaposition of quite dissimilar things, and this gift he had in a very high degree, fed as it was by the powers of the most subtle observation and a very solid fund of encyclopædic knowledge. He had it to such a degree that, in the end, his listeners were sometimes exhausted by the inextinguishable fireworks of his speech, the inexhaustible fantasy and invention, a kind of prodigal opulence of intellect which astonished and delighted his audience.

After the always ardent but remorselessly severe Belinsky, the glancing, gleaming, perpetually changing and often paradoxical and irritating, always wonderfully clever, talk of Herzen demanded of those who were with him not only interest, but intense concentration, perpetual alertness, because you had always to be prepared to respond instantly. On the other hand, nothing cheap or tawdry could stand even half an hour of contact with him. All pretentiousness, all pompousness, all pedantic self-importance, simply fled from him or melted like wax before a fire. I knew people, many of them what are called serious and practical men, who could not bear Herzen's presence. On the other hand, there were others who gave him the most blind and passionate adoration.

He had a natural gift for criticism—an unparalleled capacity for exposing and denouncing the dark sides of life. And he showed this trait very early, during the Moscow period of his life of which I am speaking. Even then Herzen's mind was in the highest degree rebellious and unmanageable, with a kind of innate, organic, detestation of anything which seemed to him to be an accepted opinion sanctified by general silence about some unverified fact. In such cases the deep, predatory, powers of his intellect would rise up in force and come into the open, sharp, cunning, resourceful.

He lived in Moscow, still unknown to the public, but in his own familiar circle he was already known as a witty and a dangerous observer of his friends. What was not then known (though he could not altogether conceal it), was that he kept secret *dossiers*, secret protocols of his own, about his dearest and most intimate friends within the privacy of his own thoughts. People who stood by his side, all innocence and trustfulness, were invariably amazed, and sometimes extremely annoyed, when they suddenly came on one or other side of this activity—the secret activity—of his mind. Strangely enough, Herzen combined with this the tenderest, most loving relations with his chosen intimates, although even they could never escape his pungent analyses. This is explained by another side

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of his character. As if to restore the equilibrium of his moral organism, nature took care to place in his soul one unshakable belief, one unconquerable inclination. Herzen believed in the noble instincts of the human heart. His analysis grew silent and reverent before the instinctive impulses of the moral organism as the sole, indubitable truth of existence. He admired anything which he thought to be a noble or passionate impulse, however mistaken; and he never amused himself at its expense.

This ambivalent, as it were, contradictory, play of his nature—suspicion and denial on the one hand and blind faith on the other—often led to perplexity and misunderstandings between him and his friends, and sometimes to quarrels and scenes. But it is precisely in this crucible of argument, in its flames, that up to the very day of his departure for Europe, people's devotion to him used to be tested and strengthened instead of disintegrating. And this is perfectly intelligible. In all that Herzen did and all that Herzen thought at this time there never was the slightest trace of anything false, no malignant feeling nourished in darkness, no calculation, no treachery. On the contrary, the whole of him was always there, in every one of his words and deeds.

And there was another reason which made one sometimes forgive him even insults, a reason which may seem unplausible to people who did not know him. With all this proud, strong, energetic intellect, Herzen had a wholly gentle, amiable, almost feminine character. Beneath the stern outward aspect of the sceptic, the satirist, under the cover of a most unceremonious, and exceedingly unreticent humour, there dwelt the heart of a child. He had a curious, angular kind of charm, angular kind of delicacy, but it was given particularly to those who were beginning, who were seeking after something, people who were trying out their powers. They found a source of strength and confidence in his advice. He took them into the most intimate communion with himself and with his ideas—which, nevertheless, did not stop him, at times, from using his full destructive, analytic powers, from performing exceedingly painful, psychological experiments on these very same people at the very same time.

This vivid and sympathetic vignette tallies with the descriptions left to us by Turgenev, Belinsky and others of Herzen's friends. It is borne out, above all, by the impression which the reader gains if he reads his own prose, his essays or the autobiographical memoirs collected under the title *My Past and Reflections*. The impression that it leaves is not conveyed even by Annenkov's devoted words.

THE chief influence on Herzen as a young man in Moscow University, as upon all the young Russian intellectuals of his time, was of course that of Hegel. But although he was a fairly orthodox Hegelian in his early years, he turned his Hegelianism into something peculiar, personal to himself, very dissimilar from the theoretical conclusions which the more serious-minded and pedantic of his contemporaries deduced from that celebrated doctrine.

The chief effect upon him of Hegelianism seems to have been the belief that no specific theory or single doctrine, no one interpretation of life, above all, no simple, coherent, well-constructed schema—neither the great French mechanistic models of the eighteenth century, nor the romantic German edifices of the nineteenth, nor the visions of the great utopians Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen, nor the socialist programmes of Cabet or Leroux or Louis Blanc—could conceivably be true solutions to real problems, at least not in the form in which they were preached.

He was sceptical if only because he believed (whether or not he derived this view from Hegel) that there could not in principle be any simple or final answer to any genuine human problem; that if a question was serious and indeed agonising, the answer could never be clear cut and neat. Above all, it could never consist in some symmetrical set of conclusions, drawn by deductive means from a collection of self-evident axioms.

This disbelief begins in Herzen's early, forgotten essays which he wrote at the beginning of the forties, on what he called dilettantism and Buddhism in science; where he distinguishes two kinds of intellectual personality, against both of which he inveighs. One is that of the casual amateur who never sees the trees for the wood; who is terrified, Herzen tells us, of losing his own precious individuality in too much pedantic preoccupation with actual, detailed facts, and, therefore, always skims over the surface without developing a capacity for real knowledge;

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who looks at the facts, as it were, through a kind of telescope, with the result that nothing ever gets articulated save enormous, sonorous generalisations floating at random like so many balloons.

The other kind of student—the Buddhist—is the person who escapes from the wood by frantic absorption in the trees; who becomes an intense student of some tiny set of isolated facts, which he views through more and more powerful microscopes. Although such a man might be deeply learned in some particular branch of knowledge, almost invariably—and particularly if he is a German (and almost all Herzen's gibes and insults are always directed against the hated Germans, and that despite the fact that he was half German himself)—he becomes intolerably tedious, pompous and blindly philistine; above all, always repellent as a human being.

Between these poles it is necessary to find some compromise, and Herzen believed that if one studied life in a sober, detached, and objective manner, one might perhaps be able to create some kind of tension, a sort of dialectical compromise, between these opposite ideals; for if neither of them can be realised fully and equally, neither of them should be altogether deserted; only thus could human beings be made capable of understanding life in some profounder fashion than if they committed themselves recklessly to one or the other of the two extremes.

This ideal of detachment, moderation, compromise, dispassionate objectivity which Herzen at this early period of his life was preaching, was something deeply incompatible with his temperament. And indeed, not long after, he bursts forth with a great paean to partiality. "I know," he writes, "that will not be well received. I know that there are certain concepts which simply are not received in good society—rather like people who have been in gaol or have disgraced themselves in some appalling way. I know that partiality is not something which is well thought of. Nevertheless, nobody has ever said anything worth saying unless he was deeply and passionately partial."

There follows a long and typically Russian diatribe against the chilliness, meanness, impossibility and undesirability of remaining objective, of being detached, of not committing oneself, of not plunging into the stream of life. The passionate voice of his friend Belinsky is suddenly audible in Herzen's writings in this phase of his development.

But the fundamental belief which emerges at this time, and is then developed throughout his later life with marvellous poetry and imagination (I say poetry advisedly; for as Dostoevsky in later years very truly said, whatever else might be said about Herzen, he was certainly a Russian poet; which saved him in the eyes of this jaundiced but, at times, uncannily penetrating critic: Herzen's views or mode of life naturally found little favour in his eyes).

The thesis which Herzen offered to the world comes to this: that any attempt to explain human conduct in terms of, or to dedicate human beings to the service of, any abstraction, be it never so noble—justice, progress, nationality—even if preached by impeccable altruists like Mazzini or Louis Blanc or Mill, always leads in the end to victimisation and human sacrifice. Men are not simple enough, human lives and relationships are too complex for standard formulae and neat solutions, and attempts to adapt individuals and fit them into a rational schema, conceived in terms of a theoretical ideal, be the motives for doing it never so lofty, always lead in the end to a terrible maiming of human beings, to political vivisection on an ever increasing scale. The process culminates in the liberation of some only at the price of enslavement of others, and the replacing of an old tyranny with a new and sometimes far more hideous one—by the imposition of the slavery of universal socialism, for example, as a remedy for the slavery of the universal Roman church.

There is a typical piece of dialogue between Herzen and Louis Blanc, the French socialist (whom he respected greatly), which Herzen quotes, and which shows the kind of levity with which Herzen sometimes expressed his

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deepest convictions. The conversation is described as having taken place in London somewhere in the early fifties. One day Louis Blanc observed to Herzen that human life was a great social duty, that man must always sacrifice himself to society.

"Why?" I asked suddenly. "How do you mean, why?" said Louis Blanc. "Surely the whole purpose and the whole mission of man is the well-being of society?" "Oh, but it will never be attained if everybody makes sacrifices and nobody ever enjoys himself." "You are playing with words." "Only the muddle-headedness of a barbarian," I said laughing.

In this gay and apparently casual passage, Herzen embodies his central principle—that the goal of life is life itself, that to sacrifice the present to some vague and unpredictable future is a form of delusion which leads to the destruction of all that alone is valuable in men and societies—to the gratuitous sacrifice of the flesh and blood of live human beings upon the altar of idealised abstractions.

Herzen is revolted by the central substance of what was being preached by some of the best and purest-hearted men of his time, particularly by socialists and utilitarians, namely, that vast suffering in the present must be undergone for the sake of an ineffable felicity in the future, that thousands of innocent men may be forced to die that millions might be happy—battle cries that were common even in those days, and of which a great deal more has been heard since. The notion that there is a splendid future in store for humanity, that it is guaranteed by history, and that it justifies the most appalling cruelties in the present—this familiar piece of political eschatology based on belief in inevitable progress seemed to him a fatal doctrine directed against human life.

The profoundest and most sustained—and the most brilliantly written—of all Herzen's statements on this topic is to be found in the volume of essays which he called *From the Other Shore*, and wrote as a memorial to his disillusionment with the European revolutions of 1848 and 1849. This great polemical masterpiece is Herzen's profession of faith and his political testament. Its tone and content is well conveyed in the characteristic (and celebrated) passage in which he asks:

If progress is the goal, for whom then are we working? Who is this Moloch who, as the toilers approach him, instead of rewarding them, draws back, and as a consolation to the exhausted and doomed multitudes shouting, "We, who are about to die, salute thee!", can only give the mocking answer that after their death all will be beautiful on earth. Do you really wish to condemn human beings alive today to the mere sad role of caryatids supporting a floor for others one day to dance upon? Of wretched galley slaves who, up to their knees in mud, drag a barge with the humble words "Future Progress" on its flag? A goal which is infinitely remote is not a goal at all, it is a deception. A goal must be closer—at the very least the labourer's wage or pleasure in work performed. Each epoch, each generation, each life has had, has, its own experience, and *en route* new demands grow, new methods.

He continues:

The end of each generation must be itself. Nature not only never makes one generation the means for the attainment of some future goal; she does not concern herself with the future at all. Like Cleopatra, she is ready to dissolve the pearl in wine for a second's pleasure. If humanity marched straight towards some result, there would be no history, only logic. One has to arrange life as best one can because there is no libretto. If history followed a set libretto, it would lose all interest, it would become unnecessary, boring, ludicrous. Great men would be simply so many heroes strutting on a stage. History is all improvisation, all will, all extemporised. There are no frontiers, there are no time-tables, no itineraries. All that exists is specific conditions, and sacred discontent, the flow of life and its endless challenge to the fighters to try their strength, to go where they will, where there is a road; and when there is no road, there genius will blast a path.

But what if someone were to ask, "Supposing all this is suddenly brought to an end? Supposing a comet strikes us and brings to an end life on earth? Will history not be meaningless? Will all this talk suddenly end in nothing? Will it not be a cruel mockery of all our efforts, all our blood and sweat and tears, if it all ends in some sudden, unexplained brute fashion by some mysterious, totally unexplained event?" Herzen replies that to think in these terms is a great

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vulgarity, the vulgarity of mere numbers. The death of a single human being is no less absurd and unintelligible than the death of the entire human race; it is a mystery we accept; merely to multiply it enormously and ask, "Supposing millions of human beings die?" does not make it more mysterious or more frightening.

In nature, as in the souls of men, there slumber endless possibilities and forces, and in suitable conditions they develop, they develop furiously. They may fill a world, or they may fall by the roadside. They may take a new direction. They may stop. They may collapse. Nature is perfectly indifferent to what happens. But then, you may ask, What is all this for? The life of people becomes a pointless game. Men build something with pebbles and grass and sand only to see it all collapse again; and human creatures crawl out from underneath the ruins and again start clearing spaces and build huts of moss and planks and broken capitals and, after centuries of endless labour, it all collapses again. Not in vain did Shakespeare say that history was a tale told by an idiot.

To this I reply that you are like those very sensitive people who shed a tear whenever they recollect that man is born but to die. To look at the end and not at the action itself is a cardinal error. Of what use to the flower is its bright magnificent bloom? Or this intoxicating scent, since it will only pass away? None at all. But nature is not so miserly. She does not disdain what is transient, what is only in the present. At every point she achieves all she can achieve. Who will find fault with nature because flowers bloom in the morning and die at night, because she has not given the rose or the lily the hardness of flint? And this miserable pedestrian principle *we* wish to transfer to the world of history. Life has no obligation to realise the fantasies and ideas of civilisation. Life loves novelty. She seldom repeats herself. She uses every accident, simultaneously knocks at a thousand doors, some of which may open—who can tell?

And again:

Human beings have an instinctive passion to preserve anything they like. Man is born and therefore wishes to live for ever. Man falls in love and wishes to be loved, and loved for ever as in the very first moment of his avowal. But life gives no guarantees. Life does not ensure existence, nor pleasure; she does not answer for their continuance. Every historical moment is full and is beautiful, is self-contained in its own fashion. Every year has its own spring and its own summer, its own winter and autumn, its own storms and fair weather. Every period is new, fresh, filled with its own hopes and carries within itself its own joys and sorrows. The present belongs to it. But human beings are not content with this, they must needs own the future too.

What is the purpose of the song the singer sings? If you look beyond your pleasure in it for something else, for some other goal, the moment will come when the singer stops and then you will only have memories and vain regrets because, instead of listening, you were waiting for something else. You must not be misled by categories that are not fitted to catch the flow of life. What is this goal for which you [he means Mazzini and the liberals and the socialists] are seeking, this permanent goal? A programme? An order? Who conceived it? To whom was the order given? Is it something inevitable? If it is, we are simply puppets. Are we morally free or are we wheels within a machine? I would rather think of life, and therefore of history, as a goal attained, not as a means to something else.

And:

Is it really the purpose of a child to grow up simply because it does grow up? No. The purpose of a child is to play, to enjoy itself, to be a child; because, if we follow the other line of reasoning, then the purpose of all life is death.

THIS is Herzen's central political and social thesis, and it enters henceforth into the stream of Russian radical thought as an antidote to the exaggerated utilitarianism of which its adversaries have so often accused it. The purpose of the singer is the song, and the purpose of life is to be lived. Everything passes, but what passes may sometimes reward the pilgrim for all his sufferings. Goethe has told us that there can be no guarantee, no security. Man could be content with the present. But he is not. He rejects beauty, he rejects fulfilment to-day, because he must own the future also. That is Herzen's answer to all those who, like Mazzini, or the socialists of his time, called for supreme sacrifices and sufferings for the sake of nationality, or human civilisation, or socialism, or justice, or humanity—if not in the present, then in the future.

Herzen rejects this violently. The purpose of the struggle for liberty is not liberty

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tomorrow, it is liberty today, the liberty of living individuals with their own individual ends, the ends for which they move and fight and perhaps die, ends which are sacred to them. To crush their freedom, their pursuits, to ruin their ends for the sake of some vague felicity in the future which cannot be guaranteed, about which we know nothing, which is simply the product of some enormous metaphysical construction that itself rests upon sand, for which there is no logical, or empirical or any other rational guarantee—to do that is in the first place blind, because the future is uncertain; and in the second place vicious because it offends against the only moral values we know; because it tramples on human demands in the name of abstractions — freedom, happiness, justice — fanatical generalisations, mystical sounds, idolised sets of words.

> Why is liberty valuable? Because it is an end in itself, because it is what it is. To bring it as a sacrifice to something else is simply to perform an act of human sacrifice.

This is Herzen's ultimate sermon, and from this he develops the corollary that one of the deepest of modern disasters is to be caught up in abstractions instead of realities. And this he maintains not merely against the Western socialists and liberals among whom he lived (let alone the enemy—priests or conservatives) but even more against his own close friend Bakunin who persisted in trying to stir up violent rebellion, involving torture and martyrdom, for the sake of dim, confused and distant goals. For Herzen, one of the greatest of sins that any human being can perpetrate is to seek to transfer moral responsibility from his own shoulders to those of an unpredictable future order, and, in the name of something which may never happen, perpetrate crimes today which no one would deny to be monstrous if they were performed for some egoistic purpose, and do not seem so only because they are sanctified by faith in some remote and intangible utopia.

For all his hatred of despotism, and in particular of the Russian régime, Herzen was all his life convinced that equally fatal dangers threatened from his own socialist and revolutionary allies. He believed this because there was a time when, with his friend, the critic Belinsky, he too had believed that a simple solution was feasible; that some great system—a world adumbrated by Saint-Simon or by Proudhon—did provide it: that if one regulated social life rationally and put it in order, and created a clear and tidy organisation, human problems could be finally resolved. Dostoevsky once said of Belinsky that his socialism was nothing but a simple belief in a marvellous life of "rich and unbelievable splendour, built on new, adamantine foundations." Because Herzen had himself once believed in these foundations (although never with simple and absolute faith) and because this belief came toppling down and was utterly destroyed in the fearful cataclysms of 1848 and 1849 in which almost every one of his idols proved to have feet of clay, he denounces his own past with peculiarly intense indignation:

> We call upon the masses to rise and crush the tyrants. The masses! The masses are indifferent to individual freedom. . . . They want a government which will rule for them, not against them. But they do not dream of governing themselves. . . . It is not enough to despise the Crown; one must not be filled with awe before the Phrygian cap either.

He speaks with bitter scorn about monolithic, oppressive communist idylls, about the barbarous "equality of the gallows," about "the slave labour camps" of socialists like Cabet, about barbarians marching to destroy.

> Who will finish us off? The senile barbarism of the sceptre or the wild barbarism of communism; the bloody sabre, or the red flag? . . . Communism will sweep across the world in a violent tempest—dreadful, bloody, unjust, swift. Our institutions, as Proudhon so politely put it, will be liquidated. I am very sorry for the death of civilisation, but the masses are not sorry; the masses to whom it brings nothing but tears, ignorance, suffering, humiliation.

He is terrified of the oppressors, but he is terrified of the liberators too. He is terrified of them because for him they are the secular heirs of the religious bigots of the ages of faith; because anybody who has a cut-and-

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dried scheme, a strait-jacket which he wishes to impose on humanity as the sole possible remedy for all human ills, is ultimately bound to create a situation intolerable for free human beings, for men like himself who want to express themselves, who want to have some area in which to develop their own resources, and are prepared to respect the originality, the spontaneity, the natural impulse towards self-expression on the part of other human beings too. He calls this Petrograndism—the methods of Peter the Great. He admires Peter the Great. He admires Peter because he did at least overthrow the feudal rigidity, the dark night, as he thinks of it, of medieval Russia. He admires the Jacobins because the Jacobins dared to do something instead of nothing. Yet he is clearly aware, and became more and more so the longer he lived (he says all this with arresting clarity in his open letter to "An Old Comrade"—Bakunin—written in the late sixties), that Petrograndism, the behaviour of Attila, the behaviour of the Committee of Public Safety in 1792—the use of methods which presuppose the possibility of simple and radical solutions—always in the end lead to oppression, bloodshed, and collapse. He declares that whatever the justification in earlier and more innocent ages of acts inspired by fanatical faith, nobody has any right to act in this fashion who has lived through the nineteenth century and has seen what human beings are really made of—the complex, crooked texture of men and institutions. Progress must adjust itself to the actual pace of historical change, to the actual economic and social needs of society, because to suppress the bourgeoisie by violent revolution—and there was nothing he despised more than the bourgeoisie, and the mean, grasping, philistine financial bourgeoisie of Paris most of all—before its historical rôle has been played out, would merely mean that the bourgeois spirit and bourgeois forms would persist into the new social order. "It is not possible to build houses for free men out of materials designed for prisons." And who shall say that history has proved that Herzen was mistaken?

His loathing of the bourgeoisie is frantic, yet he does not want a violent cataclysm. He thinks that it may be inevitable, that it may come, but he is frightened of it. The bourgeoisie seems to him like a collection of Figaros, but of Figaros grown fat and prosperous. He declares that, in the eighteenth century, Figaro wore a livery, a mark of servitude to be sure, but still something different from, detachable from, his skin; the skin, at least, was that of a palpitating, rebellious human being. But today Figaro has won. Figaro has become a millionaire. He is judge, commander-in-chief, president of the republic. Figaro now dominates the world, and, alas, the livery is no longer a mere livery. It has become part of his skin. It cannot be taken off; it has become part of his living flesh.

Everything that was repellent and degrading in the eighteenth century, against which the noble revolutionaries had protested, has grown into the intrinsic texture of the mean middle class beings who now dominate us. And yet we must wait. Simply to cut off their heads, as Bakunin wanted, can only lead to a new tyranny and a new slavery, to the rule of the revolted minorities over majorities, or worse still, the rule of majorities—monolithic majorities—over minorities, the rule of what John Stuart Mill, in Herzen's view with justice, called conglomerated mediocrity.

Herzen's values are undisguised: he likes only the style of free beings, only what is large, generous, uncalculating. He admires pride, independence, resistance to tyrants; he admires Pushkin because he was defiant; he admires Lermontov because he dared to suffer and to hate; he even approves of the Slavophils, his reactionary opponents, because at least they detested authority, at least they would not let the Germans in. He admires Belinsky because he was incorruptible, and told the truth in the face of the arrayed battalions of German academic or political authority. The dogmata of socialism seem to him no less stifling than those of capitalism or of the Middle Ages or of the early Christians.

What he hated most of all was the des-

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potism of formulæ—the submission of human beings to arrangements arrived at by deduction from some kind of *a priori* principles which had no foundation in actual experience. That is why he feared the new liberators so deeply. "If only people wanted," he says, "instead of liberating humanity, to liberate themselves, they would do a very great deal for human freedom." He knew that his own perpetual plea for more individual freedom contained the seeds of social atomisation, that a compromise had to be found between the two great social needs—for organisation and for individual freedom—some unstable equilibrium that would preserve a minimal area within which the individual could express himself and not be utterly pulverised, and he utters a great appeal for what he calls the value of egoism. He declares that one of the great dangers to our society is that individuals will be tamed and suppressed disinterestedly by idealists in the name of altruism, in the name of measures designed to make the majority happy. The new liberators may well resemble the inquisitors of the past, who drove herds of innocent Spaniards, Dutchmen, Belgians, Frenchmen, Italians to the *autos-da-fé*, and "then went home peacefully with a quiet conscience, with the feeling that they had done their duty, with the smell of roasting human flesh still in their nostrils," and slept—the sleep of the innocent after a day's work well done.

> Let us encourage egoism instead of trying to suppress it, which is anyhow impossible. Egoism is not a vice. Egoism gleams in the eye of an animal. It is wild, self-centred and salutary. Moralists bravely thunder against it, instead of building on it. What moralists try and deny is the great, inner citadel of human dignity. They want to make men tearful, sentimental, feeble, kindly creatures asking to be made slaves. But to tear egoism from a man's heart is to rob him of his living principles, of the yeast and the salt of his whole personality. Fortunately this is impossible. Of course it is sometimes suicidal to try to assert oneself. One cannot try and go up a staircase down which an army is trying to march. That is done by tyrants, conservatives, fools and criminals. Without altruism we are orang-outangs, but without egoism we are nothing but tame monkeys.

Human problems are too complex to demand simple solutions. Even the peasant commune in Russia, in which Herzen believed so deeply as a "lightning conductor," because he believed that peasants in Russia at least had not been infected by the distorting, urban vices of the European proletariat and the European bourgeoisie—even the peasant commune did not, after all, as he points out, preserve Russia from slavery. Liberty is not to the taste of the majority—only of the educated. There are no guaranteed methods, no sure paths to social welfare. We must try and do our best; and it is always possible that we shall fail.

THE heart of his thought is the notion that the basic problems are perhaps not soluble at all, that all one can do is to try to solve them, but that there is no guarantee, either in socialist nostrums or in any other human construction, no guarantee that happiness or a rational life can be attained, in private or in public life. This curious combination of idealism and scepticism—not unlike, for all his vehemence, the outlook of Erasmus, Montaigne, Montesquieu — runs through all his writings.

Herzen wrote novels, but they have not survived because he was not a born novelist. His stories are greatly inferior to those of his friend, Turgenev, but they have something in common with them. For in Turgenev's novels, too, you will find that human problems are not treated as if they were soluble. Bazarov in *Fathers and Children* suffers and dies; Lavretsky in *A House of Gentlefolk* is left in melancholy uncertainty at the end of the novel, not because something had not been done which could have been done, not because there is a solution round the corner which someone simply had not thought of, or had refused to apply, but because, as Kant once said, "from the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made." Everything is partly the fault of circumstance, partly the fault of the individual character, partly in the nature of life itself. This must be faced, it must be stated, and it is a

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vulgarity and, at times, a crime to believe that permanent solutions are always possible.

Herzen wrote a novel called *Who Is To Blame?* about a typical tragic triangle in which one of the "superfluous men" of whom I spoke earlier falls in love with a lady in a provincial town who is married to a virtuous, idealistic, but dull and naïve husband. It is not a good novel, and its plot is not worth recounting, but the main point, and what is most characteristic of Herzen, is that the situation possesses, in principle, no solution. The lover is left broken-hearted, the wife falls ill and probably dies, the husband contemplates suicide. It sounds like a typically gloomy, morbidly self-centred, caricature of the Russian novel. But it is not. It rests on an exceedingly delicate, precise, and at times profound description of an emotional and psychological situation to which the theories of a Stendhal, the method of a Flaubert, the depth and moral insight of George Eliot are inapplicable because they are seen to be too literary, derived from obsessive ideas, ethical doctrines not fitted to the chaos of life.

AT THE heart of Herzen's outlook (and of Turgenev's too) is the notion of the complexity and insolubility of the central problems, and, therefore, of the absurdity of trying to solve them by means of political or sociological instruments. But the difference between Herzen and Turgenev is this. Turgenev is, in his innermost being, not indeed heartless but a cool, detached, at times slightly mocking observer who looks upon the tragedies of life from a comparatively remote point of view; oscillating between one vantage point and another, between the claims of society and of the individual, the claims of love and of daily life; between heroic virtue and realistic scepticism, the morality of Hamlet and the morality of Don Quixote, the necessity for efficient political organisation and the necessity for individual self-expression; remaining suspended in a state of agreeable indecision, sympathetic melancholy, ironical, free from cynicism and sentimentality, perceptive, scrupulously truthful and uncommitted. Turgenev neither quite believed nor quite disbelieved in a deity, personal or impersonal; religion is for him a normal ingredient of life, like love, or egoism or the sense of pleasure. He enjoyed remaining in an intermediate position, he enjoyed almost too much his lack of will to believe, and because he stood aside, because he contemplated in tranquillity, he was able to produce great literary masterpieces of a finished kind, rounded stories, told in peaceful retrospect, with well-constructed beginnings, middles and ends. He detached his art from himself; he did not, as a human being, deeply care about solutions; he saw life with a peculiar chilliness, which infuriated both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, and achieved the exquisite perspective of an artist who treats his material from a certain distance. There is a chasm between him and his material, within which alone his particular kind of poetical creation is possible.

Herzen, on the contrary, cared far too violently. He was looking for solutions for himself, for his own personal life. His novels were certainly failures. He obtrudes himself too vehemently into them, himself and his agonised point of view. On the other hand, his autobiographical sketches, when he writes openly about himself and about his friends, when he speaks about his own life in Italy, in France, in Switzerland, in England, have a kind of palpitating directness, a sense of first-handness and reality, which no other writer in the nineteenth century begins to convey. His reminiscences are a work of critical and descriptive genius with the power of absolute self-revelation that only an astonishingly imaginative, impressionable, perpetually reacting personality, with an exceptional sense both of the noble and the ludicrous, and a rare freedom from vanity and doctrine, could have attained. As a writer of memoirs he is unequalled. His sketches of England, or rather of himself in England, are better than Heine's or Taine's. To demonstrate this one need only read his wonderful account of English political trials, of how judges, for example, looked to him when they sat in

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court trying foreign conspirators for having fought a fatal duel in Windsor Park. He gives a vivid and entertaining description of bombastic French demagogues and gloomy French fanatics, and of the impassable gulf which divides this agitated and slightly grotesque *émigré* society from the dull, frigid, and dignified institutions of mid-Victorian England, typified by the figure of the presiding judge at the Old Bailey, who looks like the wolf in *Red Riding Hood*, in his white wig, his long skirts, with his sharp little wolf-like face, thin lips, sharp teeth, and harsh little words that come with an air of specious benevolence, from the face encased in disarming feminine curls—giving the impression of a sweet, grandmotherly, old lady, belied by the small gleaming eyes and the dry, acrid, malicious judicial humour.

He paints classical portraits of German exiles, whom he detested, of Italian and Polish revolutionaries, whom he admired, and gives little sketches of the differences between the nations, such as the English and the French, each of which regards itself as the greatest nation on earth, and will not yield an inch, and does not begin to understand the other's ideals—the French with their gregariousness, their lucidity, their didacticism, their neat formal gardens, as against the English with their solitudes and dark suppressed romanticism, and the tangled undergrowth of their ancient, illogical, but profoundly civilised and humane institutions. And there are the Germans, who regard themselves, he declares, as an inferior fruit of the tree of which the English are the superior products, and come to England, and after three days "say 'yes' instead of 'ja', and 'well' where it is not required." It is invariably for the Germans that both he and Bakunin reserved their sharpest taunts, not so much from personal dislike, as because the Germans to them seemed to stand for all that was middle-class, cramping, philistine, and boorish, the sordid despotism of grey and small-minded drill sergeants, æsthetically more disgusting than the generous, magnificent tyrannies of great conquerors of history. "With us," said Herzen, "slavery is arithmetical. We are simply too few to resist the huge, overwhelming, crushing force of the Czarist régime. But German slavery is algebraical. It is part of the very formula of their souls, which nothing can eliminate." This was echoed by Bakunin a decade later: "When an Englishman or an American says 'I am an Englishman,' or 'I am an American,' he means, 'I am a free man.' When a German says 'I am a German,' he means, 'My king is more powerful than all your kings and the soldier who is strangling me now will soon strangle you all.' " This kind of sweeping prejudice, these diatribes against entire nations and classes, are characteristic of a good many Russian writers of this period. They are often ill-founded, unjust and violently exaggerated, but they are the authentic expression of an indignant reaction against an oppressive *milieu*, and of a genuine and highly personal moral vision which makes them lively reading even now.

His irreverence and the irony, the disbelief in final solutions, the conviction that human beings are complex and fragile, and that there is value in the very irregularity of their structure which is violated by attempts to force it into patterns or straitjackets—this and the irrepressible pleasure in exploding all cut-and-dried social and political schemata which serious-minded and pedantic saviours of mankind, both radical and conservative, were perpetually manufacturing, inevitably made Herzen unpopular among the earnest and the devout of all camps. In this respect he resembled his sceptical friend Turgenev, who could not, and had no wish to, resist the desire to tell the truth however "unscientific"—to say something psychologically telling, even though it might not fit in with some generally accepted, enlightened system of ideas. Neither accepted the view that because he was on the side of progress or revolution he was under a sacred obligation to suppress the truth, or to pretend to think that it was simpler than it was, or that certain solutions would work although it seemed patently improbable that they

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could, simply because to speak otherwise might give aid and comfort to the enemy.

This detachment from party and doctrine, and the tendency to utter independent and sometimes disconcerting judgments, brought violent criticism on both Herzen and Turgenev, and made their position difficult. When Turgenev wrote *Fathers and Children*, he was duly attacked both from the right and from the left, because neither was clear which side he was supporting. This indeterminate quality particularly irritated the "new" young men in Russia, who assailed him bitterly for being too liberal, too civilised, too ironical, too sceptical, for undermining noble idealism by the perpetual oscillation of political feelings, by excessive self-examination, by not engaging himself and declaring war upon the enemy, and perpetrating instead what amounted to a succession of evasions and minor treacheries. Their hostility was directed at all the "men of the forties," and in particular at Herzen who was rightly looked on as their most brilliant and most formidable representative. His answer to the stern, brutal young terrorists of the sixties is exceedingly characteristic. The new revolutionaries had attacked him for nostalgic love of an older style of life, for being a gentleman, for being rich, for living in comfort, for sitting in London and observing the Russian revolutionary struggle from afar, for being a member of a generation which had merely talked in the *salons*, and speculated and philosophised, when all round them was squalor and misery, bitterness and injustice; for not seeking salvation in some serious, manual labour—in cutting down a tree, or making a pair of boots or doing something "concrete" and real in order to identify himself with the suffering masses, instead of endless brave talk in the drawing-rooms of wealthy ladies with other well-educated, nobly-born, equally feckless young men — self-indulgence and escapism, deliberate blindness to the horrors and agonies of their world.

Herzen understood his opponents, and declined to compromise. He admits that he cannot help preferring cleanliness to dirt; decency, elegance, beauty, comfort, to violence and austerity, good literature to bad, poetry to prose. Despite his alleged cynicism and "aestheticism," he declines to admit that only scoundrels can achieve things, that in order to achieve a revolution that will liberate mankind and create a new and nobler form of life on earth one must be unkempt, dirty, brutal and violent, and trample with hob-nailed boots on civilisation and the rights of men. He does not believe this, and sees no reason why he should believe it.

As for the new generation of revolutionaries, they are not sprung from nothing:

> They are our fault. We begat them, by our idle talk in the forties. These are men who come to avenge the world against us . . . the syphilis of our revolutionary passions. . . . The new generation will say to the old: "You were hypocrites, we are cynics; you spoke like moralists; we shall speak like scoundrels; you were civil to your superiors, rude to your inferiors; we shall be rude to everyone. You bowed and felt no respect, we shall push and jostle and make no apologies."

He says in effect: Organised hooliganism can solve nothing. Unless civilisation—the recognition of the difference of good and bad, noble and ignoble, worthy and unworthy—is preserved, unless there are some people who are both fastidious and fearless, and are free to say what they want to say, and do not sacrifice their lives upon some large, nameless altar, and sink themselves into a vast impersonal, grey mass of barbarians marching to destroy, what is the point of the revolution? It may come whether we like it or not. But why should we welcome, still less work for, the victory of the barbarians who will sweep away the wicked old world only to leave ruins and misery on which nothing but a new despotism can be built? The "great case for the prosecution which Russian literature has been drafting against Russian life" does not demand a new philistinism in place of the old. "Sorrow, scepticism, irony, the three strings of the Russian lyre" are closer to reality than the crude and vulgar optimism of the new materialists.

HERZEN'S most constant goal is the preservation of individual liberty. That is the purpose of the guerrilla war which, as

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he once wrote to Mazzini, he had fought from his earliest youth. What made him unique in the nineteenth century is the complexity of his vision, the degree to which he understood the causes and nature of conflicting ideals simpler and more fundamental than his own. He understood what made—and what in a measure justified—radicals and revolutionaries: and at the same time he grasped the frightening consequences of their doctrines. He was in full sympathy with, and had a profound psychological understanding of, what it was that gave the Jacobins their severe and noble grandeur, and endowed them with a moral magnificence which raised them above the horizon of that older world which he found so attractive and which they had ruthlessly crushed. He understood only too well the misery, the oppression, the suffocation, the appalling inhumanity, the bitter cries for justice on the part of the crushed elements of the population under the *ancien régime*, and at the same time he knew that the new world which had risen to avenge these wrongs, must, if it was given its head, create its own excesses and drive millions of human beings to useless mutual extermination. Herzen's sense of reality—in particular of the need for, and the price of, revolution, is unique in his own, and perhaps in any age. His sense of the critical moral and political issues of his time is a good deal more specific and concrete than that of the majority of the professional philosophers of the nineteenth century, who tended to try to derive general principles from observation of their society, and to recommend solutions which are deduced by rational methods from premisses formulated in terms of the tidy categories in which they sought to arrange opinions, principles and forms of conduct. Herzen was a publicist and an essayist whom his early Hegelian training had not ruined: he had acquired no taste for academic classifications: he had a unique insight into the "inner feel" of social and political predicaments: and with it a remarkable power of analysis and exposition. Consequently he understood and stated the case, both emotional and intellectual, for violent revolution, for saying that a pair of boots were of more value than all the plays of Shakespeare (as the "nihilistic" critic Pisarev once said in a rhetorical moment), for denouncing liberalism and parliamentarism which offered the masses votes and slogans, when what they needed was food, shelter, clothing; and understood no less vividly and clearly the æsthetic and even moral value of civilisations which rest upon slavery, where a minority produces divine masterpieces, and only a small number of persons have the freedom and the self-confidence, the imagination and the gifts to be able to produce forms of life that endure, works which can be shored up against the ruin of our time.

This curious ambivalence, the alternation of indignant championship of revolution and democracy against the smug denunciation of them by liberals and conservatives, with no less passionate attacks upon revolutionaries in the name of free individuals; the defence of the claims of life and art, human decency, equality and dignity, with the advocacy of a society in which human beings shall not exploit or trample on one another even in the name of justice or progress or civilisation or democracy or other abstractions—this war on two, and often more, fronts, wherever and whoever the enemies of freedom might turn out to be—makes Herzen the most realistic, sensitive, penetrating, and convincing witness to the social life and the social issues of his own time. His greatest gift is that of untrammelled understanding: he understood the value of the so-called "superfluous" Russian idealists of the forties because they were exceptionally free, and morally attractive, and formed the most imaginative, spontaneous, gifted, civilised and interesting society which he had ever known. At the same time he understands the protest against it of the exasperated, deeply earnest, *révolté* young radicals, repelled by what seemed to them gay and irresponsible chatter among a group of aristocratic *flâneurs*, unaware of the mounting resentment of the sullen mass of the oppressed peasants and lower officials that would one day sweep them and their world away in a

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tidal wave of violent, blind, but justified hatred which it is the business of true revolutionaries to foment and direct. Herzen understood this conflict, and his autobiography conveys the tension between individuals and classes, personalities and opinions both in Russia and in the West, with marvellous vividness and precision.

The Past and Reflections is dominated by no single clear purpose, it is not committed to a thesis; its author was not enslaved by any formula or any political doctrine, and for this reason, it remains a profound and living masterpiece, and Herzen's greatest title to immortality. He possesses other claims: his political and social views were arrestingly original, if only because he was among the very few thinkers of his time who in principle rejected all general solutions, and grasped, as very few thinkers have ever done, the crucial distinction between words that are about words, and words that are about persons or things in the real world. Nevertheless it is as a writer that he survives. His autobiography is one of the great monuments to Russian literary and psychological genius, worthy to stand beside the great novels of Turgenev and Tolstoy. Like *War and Peace*, like *Fathers and Children*, it is wonderfully readable, and, save in inferior translation, not dated, not Victorian, still astonishingly contemporary in feeling.

One of the elements in political genius is a sensibility to characteristics and processes in society while they are still in embryo and invisible to the naked eye. Herzen possessed this capacity to a high degree, but he viewed the approaching cataclysm neither with the savage exultation of Marx or Bakunin nor with the pessimistic detachment of Burckhardt or Tocqueville. Like Proudhon he believed the destruction of individual freedom to be neither desirable nor inevitable, but, unlike him, as being highly probable, unless it was averted by deliberate human effort. The strong tradition of libertarian humanism in Russian socialism, defeated only in October 1917, derives from his writings. His analysis of the forces at work in his day, of the individuals in whom they were embodied, of the moral presupposition of their creeds and words, and of his own principles, remains to this day one of the most penetrating, moving, and morally formidable indictments of the great evils which have grown to maturity in our own time.

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THE YOUNGER GENERATION

I. THE FACTS OF YOUNG LIFE

IN ANY modern industrialised society it seems reasonable to define youth as the years between leaving school and getting married. Fortunately for the tidy-minded statistician, both these boundaries are clearly defined and fairly stable in post-war Britain. Almost everyone now stays at school at least until he has passed his fifteenth birthday, and all but a very small minority leave before reaching seventeen years of age. The time for marrying is almost equally well-established. In spite of the changes in ideas about parental responsibility that have been brought about by war, full employment, and extensive social services, it is still very unusual to marry before reaching twenty-one. Once that magic point has been passed, however, the rush into marriage becomes a stampede, and the typical wedding today brings together a boy of twenty-three and a girl of twenty-one. We can, therefore, translate our original definition of youth into chronological terms: they comprise the 4½ million young people aged 16 to 22.

Before considering the sort of lives they lead, it is worth underlining two features peculiar to the youth of today—their own scarcity and the prosperity of their parents in recent years. Today's 4½ million young people are the first beneficiaries (and victims?) of the mass application of birth control throughout British society. They constitute only 12% of today's total population over school-leaving age, and their scarcity value in a variety of contexts—economic, social, and emotional—is obviously far greater than that of the 5½ million young people who were struggling with the adult world in the early 1930's. The impact on the labour market provides one of the few remaining simple lessons in economic theory—large employers place full-page advertisements in the *Manchester Guardian* to flatter and entice the young school-leaver ("There's room for your ambitions . . . in this group . . . we have a special need for young, keen brains sustained by the driving force of high ambition. No need to lower your sights if you are working with [us]; set them as high as you like"). The lesser tycoons are equally desperate but more direct, and between them fill page after page of classified advertising in the newspapers ("5-day week, hrs. 9.30–5.0; subsidised canteen, pension scheme, good salary, interesting work, pleasant offices, experience desirable but not essential"). The coming years should lessen slightly the tone of hysterical distress currently imposed on would-be employers of the young: in five years' time the abundant babies born in the mid-1940's will be launched on their working careers.

The other novel feature has had a more subtle, but perhaps more durable influence on today's youth. All but the oldest of them started going to school at a time when unemployment and poverty had, for the first time, been pushed out of the lives of nearly all working-class parents. They were brought up during years when these parents could

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afford (sometimes with the aid of the State) to feed and clothe their children decently and also to gratify unhesitatingly their more extravagant demands for money to spend on comics, ice cream, toys, cinemas, sweets, "Cokes," and outings. An earlier generation of working-class parents had been forced to regard these things differently. The majority of them had looked upon any supplies of both necessities and luxuries that they were able to afford as fortuitous gifts of Providence to be enjoyed to repletion while they lasted. Only a minority had learned from the 19th century middle class the lessons of the balance between diligence and reward, self-denial and achievement; for these the good things of life were security and gentility bought at a nerve-wracking cost. It is possible that the products of the indulgent family of the 1940's will, as adults, be less self-destructive than their predecessors. Alternatively, they may be self-centred young savages constantly pursuing easy gratifications. Certainly they will be different.

Leaving School

OF TODAY'S 4½ million young people, a full 75% have left school and are in paid jobs, another 10% are in the Armed Forces, another 10% (mainly girls) are at home coping with their domestic and social responsibilities, and only 5% are in full-time attendance at a school or university preparing to provide the nation with its annual trickle of new doctors, dentists, civil servants, clergymen, teachers, scientists, engineers, business managers, lawyers, scholars, and research workers. Scarcely 15,000 boys and only 6,000 girls start on a full-time university education each year, and the annual output of 17,000 young people with degrees from all our universities expands the nation's total stock of graduates by 3%—a rate of growth surpassed by practically every country one can think of. In so far as inequalities of income and social status are maintained by scanty recruitment into the better-paid occupations, the climate and policies of Britain's post-war Welfare State have contributed but slightly towards a more egalitarian state of affairs.

The supporters of the 1944 Education Act hoped that roughly 20% of children would carry on with a grammar school education up to their eighteenth birthday and that a third of these would eventually complete a university training. The outcome has been far different; today only about 100,000 of the 650,000 16-year-olds, 60,000 of the 17-year-olds, and a mere 30,000 of those aged 18 are attending school full time. The educational ladder is not much more spacious than it was before the war, and disappointed reformers are still not completely sure why their plans have misfired and their proffered benefactions have been rejected. There are, however, some clues.

Little evidence exists to support the view that the number of places provided in grammar schools is markedly insufficient (except in a handful of counties) to absorb every reasonably promising child; in some areas municipal generosity may indeed be judged to have gone beyond this point. The trouble lies with the "early-leavers"—the children who give up before reaching the sixth form. According to the 1954 report of the Central Advisory Council for Education, over half the children of semi-skilled and unskilled workers admitted to English grammar schools either fail their fifth-form examinations or drop out before taking them. The children who stay the course are predominantly the sons and daughters of fathers holding professional, managerial, and clerical posts; these parents constitute less than 20% of the occupied population who are also parents, but their children make up nearly 60% of all sixth-formers in our schools. The Council indicated that the causes of these differences in performance might be found essentially in the different social assumptions which affect not only a child's parents but the whole group in which he is brought up and has to spend his non-school hours. In many lower working-class homes, the child who stays at school beyond the age of 15 is regarded by his group and even by his parents as an anti-social abnormality. Moreover, points of contact between the subculture mobilised round the tabloid press and

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the sub-culture identified by its reading of the *Manchester Guardian* or *The Times* are so few that there is little hope for any merging of their outlooks in the near future. (They may even become fewer as a prosperous and politically powerful working class consciously rejects the values of its one-time "betters.") For the vast majority of children, the real point of growing up is to be rid of schooling, and to have money to spend. And these goals they manage to achieve by the age of 16.

Getting Ready for "Real" Life

THE transition from school to non-school is probably a dramatic day in the life of all these children, but for most of them the shock is tempered by the fact that they have spent the last year or two at school preparing themselves in their own way for what they believe to be the adult world. Several studies of school-children aged 14 and 15 show quite vividly the direction of these preparations. They cut down their reading of comics (from four a week to three), and they switch their loyalties from one type to another. They give up the brightly-coloured all-picture ones—*Beano*, *Dandy*, and *Topper*; the boys tend to replace them, in part, with *Rover*, *Adventure*, and *Hotspur* where the illustrations are subordinate to the text and the stories concern the adventures of men and boys in professional sport, winning fortunes in Central Africa, and defeating amorphously defined totalitarian foreigners and blindly destructive animals. The girls turn *en masse* to *School Friend*, *Girl*, and *Girls' Crystal* where the pictures are retained but are in black and white and where the heroines, in and out of school, are involved not only with animals and adults but, quite frequently, with boys.

Both boys and girls stop collecting stamps and wild flowers and start giving away their pets. They leave the Scouts and Guides and start to join youth and sports clubs (preferably mixed ones). They stop going to the Saturday morning cinema clubs but a majority start visiting the cinema regularly at least one or two evenings each week. When recently a nation-wide sample of 14- and 15-year-olds were asked what they liked best—watching television, reading books, reading comics, going to the pictures, or listening to the wireless—over one-third cast their votes for going to the pictures and this form of "activity" came top of the poll.

Among older children whose parents have a television set, the children's programmes are ignored but a majority stay up until 9 and 10 o'clock at night on at least five evenings a week to watch their favourites—Ask Pickles, The Grove Family, Fabian of the Yard on the BBC, and Dragnet and Escapers' Club on ITA.

But perhaps the most important change is that some of the foregone comics are replaced by adult publications. The sample survey already referred to showed that among children aged 14 and 15, 27% read the *Daily Mirror* regularly, 35% the *News of the World*, 34% the *Sunday Pictorial*, 33% *Weekend Reveille*; and of the girls, 31% read *Woman* and 27% *Woman's Own*. With these as their favourite and constant reading-matter, they have taken a large step towards the world in which their post-school years will be spent.

First Jobs

DURING the school years ending mid-1954, some 650,000 children in Great Britain celebrated their fifteenth birthday; precisely two-thirds of them left school and almost all of these started to earn their living immediately. Of the 212,000 boys aged 15 who took jobs in 1954, only one-third became apprentices and learners in skilled crafts—mainly in the engineering and building trades; a further 5% took clerical jobs; the great majority started on careers as unskilled or at best semi-skilled workers—not a very promising outlook for a nation hovering on the brink of a second industrial revolution in a highly competitive world. The 202,000 girls were even less interested in long-term employment prospects — only 5% became apprentices or learners in skilled crafts, mainly in the clothing trades; 25% started

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as clerks; one-third became shop assistants; and the rest turned largely to unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in textile, clothing, or food-processing factories.

The products of the secondary modern schools are not, of course, the only entrants to the labour market; in the average year they are flanked by roughly 100,000 from the grammar schools and by 20,000 from the universities — not necessarily graduates. Moreover, after taking their first job, there is usually a fair amount of moving around by unskilled and semi-skilled workers; and the latest figures of industrial employment suggest that, in one or two directions at least, young people as a group are diverging sharply from the older pattern of employment in this country.

At mid-1954 there were 13,840,000 male employees at work in Great Britain and 12% of them (1,685,000) were under 23 years of age. But in agriculture and the building trades young males account, not for 12%, but for almost one-fifth of the labour force, and the future prosperity of these boys depends heavily upon a continuing Government policy to help the electorate consume the products of these two industries at less than their cost price. In choosing their jobs young workers have decided that some are particularly unattractive—they are laggards in entering the nationalised industries (transport, gas, electricity), and they have much less taste than their elders for the personal service occupations.

Of the 7,350,000 female employees, as many as 27% are under 23 years of age; but again this is a somewhat misleading average. In the distributive trades almost 40% of employees are under 23, and many of the smaller factory industries have been nearly as successful in attracting young girls—often as office workers. Their gains have been entirely at the expense of the domestic service trades where only 15% of the women employed are in the young group. With full employment, young people are able to indulge their dislike of all occupations which suggest that they are either private or public servants. In the coming years, and as the number of school-leavers increases, it is possible that a much smaller proportion of the nation's young women will find jobs as shop assistants and clerks; the development of self-service techniques, super-

ESTIMATED DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEES, GREAT BRITAIN, MID-1954

Industry	*Male employees*		*Female employees*	
	Total	*Proportion under 23 years* %	*Total*	*Proportion under 23 years* %
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	632,000	18	100,000	26
Building and contracting	1,304,000	17	49,000	33
Distributive trades	1,130,000	15	1,156,000	36
Engineering, vehicles, tools, etc.	3,412,000	13	899,000	28
Food, drink, tobacco	488,000	13	376,000	31
Miscellaneous manufacturers	495,000	13	334,000	35
Mining and quarrying	851,000	13	—	—
China, glass, paint, furniture	850,000	12	292,000	31
Textiles, clothing, leather	646,000	12	1,075,000	31
Domestic service, catering, etc.	433,000	10	1,206,000	15
Transport, public utilities	1,780,000	9	285,000	27
Government, professions, etc.	1,819,000	7	1,578,000	21
Total	13,840,000	12	7,350,000	27

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markets, and electronic office equipment may compel more and more of them to consider earning a living either in manufacturing industry or in personal service professions such as nursing. On the other hand, their determination to stand behind a counter or sit at a desk until they marry may be so implacable that it will prevent the full application of these inventions to the British economy for many years.

Earning and Spending

THE average boy who has just left school at 15 will be in a job that pays him at least £4 a week; and older boys, while still in their teens, are making £5 and £6 a week. Many collective wage agreements provide that the male worker qualifies for full adult rates as soon as he reaches his twenty-first birthday, and in his last year or two before marrying the weekly earnings of the average young worker may well be £10 or £11.

At least in the early years after leaving school there is no great discrepancy in the earnings of boys and girls. The average young girl straight from a secondary modern school receives £3 or £4 a week whether she goes into a factory or a shop. Slightly older girls will be making an average of £5, but for women there is no special economic value in reaching the age of 21. In one or two exceptional industries—transport and vehicle construction—young women of 21 may earn £8 a week, but the average is much nearer £7.

Before the war many young workers handed over their earnings to "Mum" and received back an austere allowance of a few shillings to cover fares, snacks, and pocket money. In the post-war world the rôles tend to be reversed. "Mum" is given £1 or £2 as a contribution to the family's household expenditure and the young earner holds on to the rest. Compared with the younger workers of twenty years ago, the working boy and girl of today are magnificently well off, and their spending is one of the mainstays of many flourishing markets — soft drinks, cosmetics, confectionery, foundation garments, hosiery, hairdressing, professional sport, cinema, sportswear, bicycles and motorbikes, popular magazines, holiday tours, popular gramophone records, cheap jewellery, shoes.

Their entry into some of these markets practically coincides with their first pay-packets. For example, in late 1955, Odhams Press carried out a nationwide survey among women and measured their use of cosmetics. The findings showed that for most products girls aged 16 to 18 were often the most lavish consumers. In the seven days before being interviewed, 62% of these girls had shampooed their hair, 24% had applied a setting lotion, 21% had painted their nails with nail varnish, 57% had rubbed in hand lotion, 82% had used face powder, 52% had set a suitable base for their powder by rubbing in a foundation cream, 94% had brightened their faces with lipstick; to add depth and lustre to their eyes 20% had used mascara, 12% eye shadow, and 17% eyebrow pencil; small minorities of them had even larger "beauty kits" which included skin-foods, cleansing milks, face-packs, rouge, cake make-up, cuticle cream, hair conditioners, tinting lotions. Almost identical rates of consumption for all these cosmetics are shown for the older girls, and only after the marrying years is there any falling away.

Young girls spend even more of their money on shoes and clothes—mainly the less durable kind such as nylon stockings, party frocks, novelty blouses and knitwear, dance shoes, etc. Probably over half the average young girl's "free" money goes on these two items—cosmetics and clothes; i.e. on getting ready to go out or to be taken out.

The typical boys' expenditure after clothes have been bought goes largely either on killing time with other boys—watching football matches, playing the pin tables, sitting and smoking in cafés over tepid "Cokes," occasionally struggling with a glass of beer at the local pub—or else taking a girl out to a dance or to the pictures.

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"Leisure"

For most boys and girls, going out in the evening is the focal purpose of the day. It replaces their childhood obsession with leaving school and is the fulfilment of their new status as earners. Their leisure life is for them the "real" thing, the essence of quasi-adulthood. A recent nationwide survey, carried out among young people aged 16 to 24, showed that in the course of a week all but 3% went out at least once. Their outings were as follows: 66% went to the pictures at least once, 52% visited friends, 26% went to an organised meeting of some kind—youth club, evening class, trade union meeting,—25% went to a dance hall or jazz club, 24% "just walked around with friends," 18% went to church or chapel, 12% visited a pub, and 11% played football and similar games. The average boy was out three evenings a week and the average girl twice; in summer the number of outings is almost doubled. On the average evening through the year, 60% of young people are "out." No other section of the British population behaves in this way. In the post-youth world the ideal and habitual daily course is to finish work, go home, shut (possibly lock) the front door, draw the curtains, eat, watch the television, listen to the radio, read the paper, doze, have a snack, and go to bed.

The critic with conventional middle-class values may be tempted to draw some consolation from the 26% of young people who went either to an organised meeting held at a youth club, etc., or attended evening classes. But there would be little to support his cheerfulness. Certainly a great deal of public money is spent on encouraging some of these endeavours. There are, for example, roughly 11,000 grant-aided establishments in Great Britain providing evening classes. Each year about one-third of the young people aged 16 to 22 (girls greatly outnumber boys) enrol and seek further education over a wide range of subjects—art and handicrafts, building and carpentry, mathematics and engineering, dressmaking and cookery, and, above all, shorthand and typewriting. The non-vocational courses (e.g. art and cookery) are undoubtedly often supported by enthusiasts, and those who register for the shortest courses usually hold on, but a recent report from Glasgow is more typical of what happens to the classes intended for young technicians: "The committee found that of the hundreds who enrolled annually in the first year of trades courses, 10 per cent never attended a single class, 30 per cent gave up by January, and only 25 per cent enrolled for a second term. Of that 25 per cent, only 5 per cent received some certificate of qualification at the end of three years." (*Times Educational Supplement*, 21st January, 1955.)

The vitality and success of the youth club movement is equally limited. About 1 million of the 16 to 22's belong to these clubs—and this includes the 200,000 in the uniformed associations (Air Training Corps, Army Cadet Force, Sea Cadet Corps, Boy Scouts, Boys' Brigade, etc.) and the 60,000 members of Young Farmers' Clubs. A majority of all members are boys; most of them are under 19 years of age; and at least two large-scale recent enquiries suggest that even among these younger adolescents attendance is often fitful and apathetic. The reasons for this are manifold, but often they spring from the parsimony exercised by all post-war governments in their grants to the Youth Service that was set up with so much publicity in 1939. As a result of this niggardliness the meeting places are often shabby, badly lit, cold, poorly equipped, draughty, and ramshackle; the poorly-paid professional staff is inadequate in numbers and far from well trained. The final product is unlikely to attract young people who, by spending two or three shillings, can enjoy for a whole evening commercially-organised entertainment, with its professionally-produced stream of comfort and excitement in a contemporary idiom.

Politics, Religion, and the Mass Media

The failure of the political parties and the trade union movement to provide leisure interests for young people is even more marked, and the Labour Party has gone

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so far as to admit the facts and contemplates disbanding its youth branches. This does not mean that the young are without political attitudes. In a recent survey in which boys and girls aged 16 to 24 were asked how they would vote if they had a vote in a general election, only 26% were uncertain; of the remainder, 54% answered Labour, 40% Conservative, and 6% Liberal and others. This contrast between their lack of interest in politics and their certainty about their voting intentions presumably means that, like their elders, they can identify *their* party without going to the bother of direct participation in formal politics.

As we have already noted, in the average week 18% of young people attend church or chapel. Roughly another 18% go occasionally. The rest are far from being convinced or energetic agnostics and atheists; their position can best be summed up as one of drab neutrality, relieved only by a readiness to try prayer either when they want something very badly (e.g. fine weather for their holidays) or when they are in serious trouble (e.g. pregnant while unmarried).

In short, while it would be superficial to ignore the hundreds of thousands of young people whose maturing is aided by the traditional institutions—religion, education, politics, group recreations under guidance of their elders—there can be no doubt that millions do without these aids and depend instead upon the mass means of communication. The quantitative importance of the cinema in their lives has already been described. No less substantial is their appetite for the popular press. Each day 35% of all young people read the *Daily Mirror* and 24% the *Daily Express*; no other morning newspaper has even a third of the latter's popularity but only 10% of the 16 to 22's fail to read a daily paper. At the week-end 48% read the *News of the World*, 40% the *Sunday Pictorial*, and 30% the *People*. The average adolescent usually has time for at least two Sunday newspapers. During the week they turn to the latest of the mass magazines with a readiness unmatched by their elders: 37% read *Weekend Reveille*, 23% *Midweek Reveille*, 22% *Weekend Mail*, and 14% *Titbits*; *Picturegoer*, *Photoplay*, *True Romances*, and *True Confessions* are also outstandingly popular with the young of both sexes. The girls supplement this general reading with specialised magazines—42% of them read *Woman* each week and 38% *Woman's Own*.

Most of the general publications mentioned above are fairly uniform in presentation—plenty of pictures, an abundance of one-syllable words and short sentences, large headlines, and items that rarely run to more than two or three short paragraphs. The contents show a similar uniformity—news stories about people (mainly the glamorous and successful young and to a lesser extent the objectionable middle-aged), the sex war ("She wouldn't let him wear the pants"), unhappy marriages, show business, crime, and of course, comic strips, cartoon jokes, horoscopes, and answers to those who have written in about their problems.

The women's magazines which appeal to young girls are much more dignified in presentation and more directly utilitarian in content. They deal mainly with clothes, cosmetics, health, good looks, the proprieties of courting and of dealing with "entanglements," the domestic lives of the good and great, the sex war ("I was afraid of my husband"), holidays, cookery, and, of course, horoscopes and answers to personal problems.

The consumption of mass-produced entertainment and reading matter by the young is so extravagant and along lines often so different from that of their elders that their function is worth considering for a moment. As far as older people are concerned the main social purposes of going to the pictures, looking at the television, or reading seem to be three: to kill time, to prevent other people talking to them, and to equip themselves with the same stock of conversational trivia that others have and thus make possible fairly amiable contacts with them on a completely impersonal level.

Young people have no particular need of these three services. The bulk of them seem to be essentially gregarious and they read and

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go to the pictures in order to know what's going on, to have something to talk about on a level of real sociability, to find out what they ought to be doing in order to register progress in their growing up, and, above all, how to deal with the opposite sex.

Sex and Marriage

IT IS unlikely that the present generation of young people is more preoccupied with sex than were its predecessors. But what is certain is their greater readiness to marry early, to engage in pre-marital intercourse, and to regard these developments as right and proper.

The propensity of post-war Britons to marry early and to conceive outside marriage has already drawn wide comment and the facts are no longer a surprise: today half the women in Britain aged 20 to 24 are married, while before the war the proportion was only 25%. Again, between the 1930's and today, the annual ratio of illegitimate live births per 1,000 single women has almost doubled; and finally, in the average post-war year, as in the thirties, at least 16% of all brides were pregnant at the time of their marriage.

Information on how young people regard these developments is less precise and scantier, but there are at least two pointers. The Church of Scotland's Committee on the Religious Instruction of Youth issued in mid-1955 a report on its questionnaire enquiry among young people. It found that 38% of the boys and 12% of the girls who were asked thought that there was nothing wrong in pre-marital relations "if the couple were engaged"; a substantial minority of the young men saw nothing wrong even if the couple were not engaged. Half the people interviewed were members of the Church.

A less direct light on the scene is provided in the various studies carried out recently on behalf of King George's Jubilee Trust. These suggest that courting and the pursuit of an early marriage is the main goal and often the main worry of many young girls, and that part of the lack of success of youth clubs springs from the feeling among these girls that by taking part in the activities of large mixed groups they run a risk of losing their boy friend. Apparently the youngsters treat courting as something to which all other activities must give way; some of them pair off as early as 13 or 14, and by 17 serious courting is widespread.

The portrait of modern British youth which emerges from this account of its work and leisure may not be altogether pleasing to its elders. If so, they might remember that adult society usually gets the adolescents it deserves; they can be grateful that more young people do not realise that they often fail to get the adults they deserve.

Mark Abrams

II. SO AWFUL TO BE YOUNG

Or, Morning to Midnight in Espresso Bars

THIS is a simple traveller's tale, not an account of a scientific expedition. No trained researchers, speaking the language fluently, went along to make cross-check interviews; no questionnaires were circulated to the inhabitants; no adding machines tabulated percentages of hope and fear per head of population. Full of expectations and ignorance, I made a long sight-seeing trip through the Espresso-bar country

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of London, stared at the young natives, and came gladly home at last with many pictures in my mind but little understanding.

It is impossible to remember with exactness oneself and one's friends and that life, at the age of twenty; my untrustworthy recollection is that we were all very shabby and fierce. This was in Paris, and we were following an ancient tradition. The particular young I have been seeing here are not nearly as shabby as we were, and are apparently quite calm, or even muted. This is a result of war, I am told, the last of which they knew as children. The young feel insecure, I am told, and mind it. Of course the very word, insecure, with its present meaning, is new: an unlucky addition to thinking. The youthful Espresso-ites remained hopelessly strangers, in their strange, small, chosen land; I can only report what I have seen.

The Espresso bar is a whopping money-maker, and its largest clientele is young people. Here in scenes of varying charm they can have company and warmth, from morning until midnight or later, at the minimum outlay of ninepence for a cup of foamy, milky coffee. The owners of the Espressos make a profit of sixpence or sevenpence on a cup, which perhaps explains their tolerance for slow drinkers. The young talk a great deal about the pleasures of good coffee although most of it is growing daily waterier and waterier and cooler and cooler. The young like it; beer is no longer a symbol of being free and grown-up, other drink costs far too much, and besides the *mise-en-scène* of the Espresso is an enchantment in itself. Bull-fight posters, bamboo, tropical plants, an occasional shell or Mexican mask, the whole range of adornment, feel romantic, feel like distant places. Instead of the solitary evening in the bed-sitter, or the hampered evening with the family, or the silent evening in the cheap seats at the neighbourhood cinema, there is this glamour, the other young to look at, sometimes music (juke-box, guitarist, a band in the basement) and the chance to make friends.

At these Espressos, you can get a quick meal at any hour, cheap and filling: soup and a toasted sandwich, hamburgers, a bowl of risotto, "open sandwiches" (often alluringly named: "King Christian," on a slice of brown bread, a weary lettuce leaf, and a slab of processed cheese with caraway seed scattered over it), and divers alarming foreign-sounding specialities of the house. If broke, you can stave off hunger for 2s.; if pay or allowance has just come in, you can eat your head off for 7s. It is no surprise that the Espressos have flourished until, within two years, there are said to be 475 of them in London; no surprise that none has gone bankrupt as yet.

And it would seem that, like lampshades, anyone can make an Espresso bar. No previous experience or training is necessary, and little capital. The coffee machines cost a small fortune, from £350 to £800, but can be installed on the hire-purchase system, and buy themselves with lightning speed. The interior decoration can just as well be home-made as not, if funds are low. The help is floating and casual; out-of-work actors wash plates and cups, novices dominate those coffee fire-engines, after one try; any girl with a full skirt and a suitable expression (what is it: democratic disdain?), any boy with a bright shirt and lots of hair, can dump the order on the bar or the small tables. Amateurism in fact pays, perhaps by setting the desirable tone of intimate harum-scarumry.

By their names shall ye know them, more or less. Les Enfants Terribles, a Soho Espresso, has wall-paintings of the school of Cocteau, naturally; intensely naked males and a lot of other goings-on in black lines on glaring white. This is a place popular with foreign youth. Two blonde girls sat on the usual narrow bench, with the usual low table cutting into their knee-caps, and worked earnestly on a crossword puzzle, aided by their Dutch-English dictionaries. A beautiful French youth, with black velvet eyes and hair, called hopelessly to another French youth, entering in duffel-coat, "*Ça marche?*", and was rewarded by a sort of ballet movement, a stretch towards the ceiling. It was

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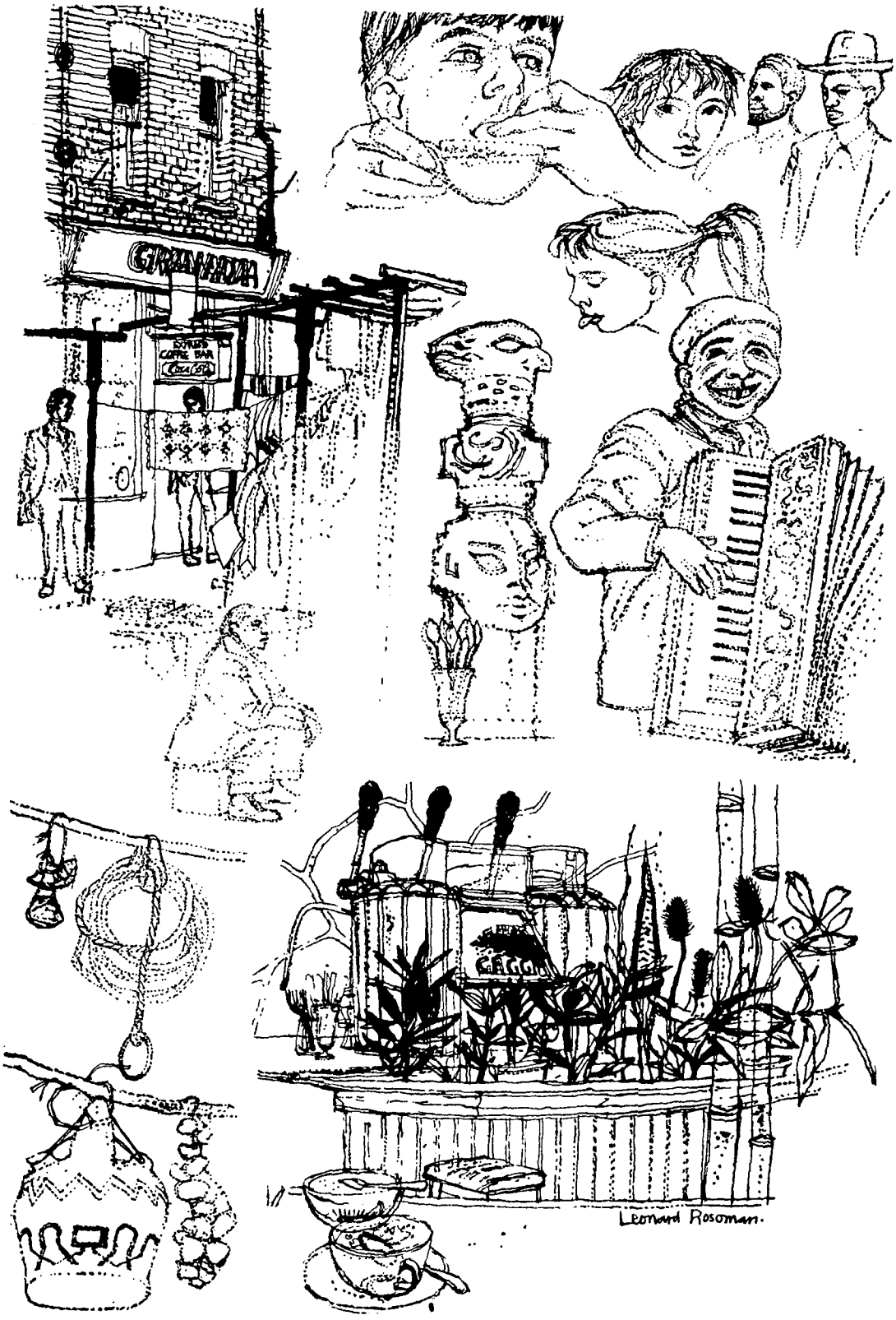

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very quiet, studded with reading girls. Then a middle-aged man came in, wormed his way to a place in the corner, rubbed his hands, and said to the waiter, "I feel terribly depressed."

Not far away is the Cat's Whiskers, dedicated to English youth and much frequented by students from a large commercial art school. Here the *décor* is spinach-green walls with a number of cats traipsing across them. I lunched, on granite risotto, their choice, with four undergraduate interior decorators. They were very young, younger than seems possible, shy, gentle, really nice children, happy and parochial. They love their work: present project being to design a coffee bar. They frequent the same Espresso in small friendly droves; when they move on to another, for new sights and faces, they still move in droves. They are sure they will get jobs; they admire those of their colleagues who work to earn their tuition or to supplement allowances; they claim that they talk a lot about everything, "art, religion, politics," they said in an unconvinced way, but what makes their eyes shine is the subject of jazz. The girl with the black wind-blown cut remarked that their discussion group at school was stopped by the authorities because it turned out to be so Red, but that was absurd and they ought to start another. The boy in the turtle-neck sweater said, "All you have to do is get four or five people at a table in the canteen and talk." "Like the Christian Union," she said, and they laughed; the Christian Union evidently being regarded as a certified bunch of poops. "They sit around," she said, in explanation to me, "telling everyone that Christianism [*sic*] will fix everything."

NIGHT in Soho is another matter; I saw two extremes of scenery in the distance of one street. The first was the Moka Café run by and for Italians. The walls and counter were the same, formica or plastic, beige, ugly; light poured down unabashed from the ceiling, the door was open, the street came into the clean, unpretending room. At the street end, a group of young people sat and stood around an accordion player. This man, a North African Arab, had two stumps of teeth in his half-open, always-smiling mouth, and a dirty beret on his head; he looked as if he knew everything about being happy. On his accordion hung a small, soiled, green velvet bag, of the sort passed on a pole in church. He played and the clients sang, singing easily, loudly, all together, happily, of *amore*. The boy at the Espresso machine sang too. There was a girl, someone's invaluable Italian maid? wearing that spell-binding colour combination one so often sees in Italy, the coral-pink sweater, the shabby wine-red coat; she was shiny-nosed, unpainted, dowdy, gay, and warbled like a bird. Her friend was a gnome, with knees almost immediately below sturdy hips: she wore tight black trousers, a short polo-coat, a huge blue angora beret, and by her caricature costume made a monkey of all the young ladies on the King's Road. There was a pair of lovers, he with fixed, melting eyes and stubbled chin, she leaning against him with a confident, helpless, Moslem stance; both had magnificent heads of impenetrable black curls. They sang and then gazed long at each other. There was the blonde or Irish-type Italian, who sang falsetto for fun and had them all in stitches. It was the only Espresso I have seen, from Hampstead to Chelsea, where there was joy, and no interior decoration.

Farther up the street is a famous Espresso; the youthful grape-vine speaks of this one, the Grenada, with excitement. The Grenada is favoured by negroes, which makes it exotic right off. On that night, four tired thin young coloured boys drooped over their coffee in the upstairs room, where Soho-Spanish wall-paintings add to the pervading low spirits. Behind the main bar is an alcove with pin-ball games, two drape-suited negro youths clicking at the machines, and a stagey sign warning "hemp pedlars" to peddle their wares elsewhere. After paying 2s. 6d. you can go downstairs to the basement dance-room, a dark, cold place with a cement floor and gleaming Duco walls. Against shiny

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black, on one wall, a white naked lady, dressed in a bat instead of a fig leaf, prances to the tom-tom music of painted devils or medicine men; on the opposite wall, some sort of half-breed female attempts to keep her footing although dangerously overbalanced by her bosom; more tom-toms, masks, and witch-doctors.

In the far corner a five-piece jazz band plays music which has the hypnotic quality of always sounding the same. No one here bothers with their luke-warm coffee; they have paid their 2s. 6d. to dance or sit. The clientele on a week-night was half white, half black. Across the room, a girl with the moon-like quality of Claire Bloom (only this one younger, and fair, and somehow even more vulnerable), clung tenderly to the shoulder of a West Indian, a tall, lean, loose-jointed, pale-brown boy with a nice face, whose voice occasionally drawled above the jazz, saying, "I dint say nuthin to him but he said. . . ." On the floor a negro youth, wearing a long, square-shouldered jacket and a fuzz of beard, jitterbugged with a hefty, trousered, crew-cut white girl. With empty faces and blind eyes, they played their interminable shuffling and jerking game of crack the whip. Beside us, three young Greeks, with lines of thought and suffering between their brows, talked a little in languid spurts, then relapsed into picking their noses.

VARIATIONS in class and geography go together. In a general way, Espresso youth is middle class, as the working class young do not seem to take to Italian coffee and fancy interior decoration. Occasionally, Teddy Boys from Clapham and Battersea make reverse slumming raids on the King's Road, but they cannot be considered Espresso natives. Mayfair is worldly and conventional; the young like to believe that only débutantes work those coffee machines. The Gondola, in Wigmore Street, perhaps the most *distingué* of the Espresso world, naturally attracts Young Conservatives who meet nearby at night, and weary ladies who need a sit-down after hard shopping at Debenham & Freebody. Chelsea is respectable Bohemian; the City is white-collar, functional, strongly reminiscent of filing-cases; Hampstead is *gemütlich*, faintly musical. Knightsbridge is a sort of no-man's-land.

In Knightsbridge there are two well-known Espressos, the Mocamba and the Cubano. The Mocamba's main interest to me was the beauty of its plants; I pass over the bullfight posters, the looped onions, the dead and limp pheasant. The cashier, when asked, as one indoor gardener to another, how they managed to keep their plants so happy, said she "reely didn't know, Madam, they're called for and changed every week." In the Mocamba, by now desperate for some visible signs of glamour, I was heartened to see a blonde siren sitting at the counter. This vision had long, peroxided straight hair, a fringe, gold loop ear-rings, and eyes made up for the Casbah. I was very pleased, equally pleased by the absorbed way the young man with her was looking and listening. I imagined she was saying something sultry about love, or bitter about life; much cheered, I moved closer. And heard a high voice, in the accent of Lyons, neat and assured, saying, "*Remarquez, quand j'ai un rhume, je prends tout de suite deux cachets d'aspirine. . . .*"

The Cubano, farther down the Brompton Road, is much gossiped about by the young, and it is in many ways a peculiar place. Three West Indians tend the bar. They wear batik sports shirts hanging outside their trousers. One of them has a beard, one of them has plucked eyebrows, one bites his nails. They are uniform in their dislike of the customer. Having ordered, to a stony stare and contemptuous silence, I settled back on the Dunlopillo stool, my knees cramped against the unborn calf hide which lines the counter, and studied the two tired Toucans, the endless square yards of bamboo, and all the bullied eaters.

Beside me, a good drab girl in various muddy shades of brown suddenly urged me to admire her tortillas (pronounced as written), when they arrived. "They're a kind of fried pancake," she said, "filled with chopped chicken and pork and onion—you

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wait and see." Presently a West Indian flung down the terrifying tortillas, and a bit of frozen corn-on-the-cob. The girl made touching pig-snuffling sounds of joy and greed. She hardly knew which to eat first and changed from plate to plate, in ecstasy. "You can't," she said, with butter on her chin, "get this food anywhere else."

The West Indian nail-biter suddenly flashed into life. His teeth shone like neon, his eyes rolled like marbles. He turned to his colleague at the Espresso machine, and said, "*Jackson*, look who come tru de doah!" I looked, Jackson looked, it was the siren, the two-aspirins-for-a-cold girl, welcomed on all sides by smiles from the unsmiling servitors, clearly a leader of the Knightsbridge coffee set.

THE King's Road is the most appealing Espresso terrain, agreeably bogus. These determined Bohemian boys, one suspects, wait at home while their hair and beards grow, meantime shovelling dirt under their finger-nails. The Bohemian girls must practise to achieve these chewed or straggling hair-do's, must rumple their clothes in a rumpling machine. But the King's Road Kids and their Espressos have charm. The Fantasie, ill-lit and with draped fish-net, is a real closed shop, a club where adults and outsiders are frozen out by the permanent members. In the bright, cosy, false sunlight of Roy's Bar, among the Italian murals and the *trompe-l'œil*, the public is more varied, including celebrities, whom the young serenely ignore. The Rêve has odd statuary and first-rate onion soup and a mixed clientele. The Tortuga is S.W.3 Andalusian and seems specially favoured by solitary young women with letters to read, and solitary young men, looking like painters and having much to discuss with the boys at the bar.

I ended my travels, suitably, late at night at World's End, in the Orrery. And there, at last, I saw a beauty who made the whole long trip worth while. She was impossible to place, Chinese-Javanese-Siamese, some rare Oriental mixture which produced the pure original of the face that Audrey Hepburn has imposed throughout the world. A tiny girl, with tiny square feet under the table, and beautiful long hands fluttering over it. She wore her hair in a braided horse's tail, kept in place by a golden ring. She used no make-up on her camellia skin and wide mouth and needed none. Her eyes really had the slanting, heavy-lashed darkness that the poor Western girls are always painting on with eyebrow pencils. And she was laughing, which was an unusual sight on this journey. She was telling a story to her friend, a girl who might have been Spanish-Arab-Cuban, some combination like that, and fine too, and to a boy of unknown nationality, with a round head and a straight, strong nose, a profile on a Roman coin. Her laughter was like those silver temple bells I have never heard, and the story floated out into the little room in incomprehensible snatches, words set to music. The story dealt with a chicken and a window.

AT THE end of my visit in this strange country, I had found one enviable inhabitant, for surely it would be heaven to be a tiny Chinese-Javanese-Siamese beauty, with tiny square feet and a face to break the heart and a laugh like that, and sit in an Espresso bar of an evening telling one's boon companions about chickens and windows. Failing that, however, the young can have it, it's all theirs.

This is only what I have seen. Possibly when there are no foreigners about, later still at night, the lights dim, and revelry and magic take over. Perhaps the girls shed their giant tweed skirts or their tight wool pants and appear in cloth of gold and dance sarabands, while the boys, tearing off their duffel-coats and sweaters, are revealed in Byronic white silks, all with heads like Byron too, and declaim poetry to the music of harps. Perhaps there are unknown Chaplins among them who suddenly rise to make the others cry and laugh so hard they fall off their foam-rubber cushions; perhaps pale girls,

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from dim corners, murmur songs in a style to shame Piaf. I do not know; I was not there.

There is no conclusion. The young are young and won't stay that way. Their elders will never understand them, but may feel pity. No doubt, one day these young will look back on their gay, mad youth in the Espresso bars of London and tell the new young what they have missed. The young will never understand them, but may feel pity.

Martha Gellhorn

III. YOUTH IN THE THEATRE

IF YOU have ever talked to any actors or actresses, it will not have taken you very long to discover that their favourite topic of conversation is themselves. In fact they are often almost entirely ignorant of any other topic. I accordingly decided, when I was asked to write this article, that my simplest method would be to collect some actors and actresses together and let them talk about themselves, and, since I find it easier to write dialogue than to write ordinary prose, I decided to present the result more or less verbatim. My informants were as follows—and I have given them imaginary names, since some of their remarks might not ingratiate them with the managements for whom they may hope to work: Lucia, Helena, Roland, and Anthony. I had to prompt them from time to time with leading questions, but for the most part they talked freely, sometimes all at once and on occasion, as you will see, quite off the point. I began by asking Lucia how she had started her stage career.

Lucia: Well . . .

Roland: She went to the nearest agent's office, sat on his desk, and said, "Take me."

Lucia: Beast! I did nothing of the sort.

Helena: That kind of thing doesn't get one very far nowadays. The agents are more interested in their ten per cent. Sex is just a side-line.

Lucia: How right you are. Well, to return to me. I started off as an amateur, at a very early age. In fact I was a child, and I won a prize at a dancing school. I did a tap-dance and sang "In an Eighteenth Century Drawing Room." I wore a hoop-skirt and a powdered wig, and the whole thing must have been absolutely nauseating. But my mother thought it was wonderful, and decided then and there that I should go on the stage. I was to fulfil all the ambitions she had never been allowed to realise.

Self: And have you?

Lucia: Not really. It wasn't as simple as that, and I've had one or two false starts. But Mummy has never looked back.

Self: When did you become professional?

Lucia: Oh, not until I was about seventeen. I did a lot more amateur work while I was still at school. You know the sort of thing: Gilbert and Sullivan, *The Monkey's Paw*, and, of course, Shakespeare. I believe I was a very striking Mark Antony.

Helena: And I was a magnificent Casca.

Roland: Why is it that *Julius Cæsar* is such a favourite at school? I suppose it's because Sex never rears its ugly head.

Anthony: And you can just get the costumes out of the dormitories.

Self (to Lucia): And what did you do when you left school?

Lucia: I joined a local amateur group. We were called the Vagabonds, and we tackled everything, but absolutely everything. I played Anna Christie, Amanda in *Private Lives*, Mrs. Alving, and a Woman of Canterbury. Our producer was frightfully enterprising and we even did *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, but I don't remember much about that.

Roland: Does anybody?

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Lucia: But the thing I liked most was the annual revue. We used all the sketches and songs from *Sweet and Low* and the Farjeon revues, and I did very bad impersonations of Baddeley and Gingold. I was a riot. I even got a notice in the *Stage*. Mummy was beside herself.

Roland: Isn't it extraordinary how popular revues have become in the last five or six years? People never stop doing them, and they get worse and worse. I think it's time they were banned.

Helena: So do I. But I must say I do enjoy performing in them, even though I'm meant to be a straight actress.

Lucia: My first professional job was in a revue. Shall I tell you about it? It was at the Beacon Theatre.

(*Everybody groans with horror*)

Self: Oh! Club theatres. I think we'll discuss those later. Roland, can you tell me how you started in the theatre?

Roland: Certainly. It's very simple. I went up to University after I came out of the army, and I joined the Limelight Club. You've probably heard of it. It has a lot of backing from former members who are now stars, and every year in the summer term it stages a revue—there you are, revue again. The whole University comes to see it, then it is televised, and then it is put on for two or three weeks in the West End. It's a completely amateur show, and for the most part looks it; but the critics and the BBC and the public make an enormous fuss of it, and all the managements come to see it. The whole thing has a sort of mock professional status, and one has to fight like a tiger to get into it. I managed to in my last year in the face of all sorts of bitchery, and when we had opened in town I was offered a job in a professional musical, mainly because I looked like an ex-Guards officer (which I am) and because I could sing in English and not American. My part was tiny, and the musical was a flop. But I was "in the theatre."

Helena: You make it all sound so simple.

Roland: It was—to begin with.

Self: How about you, Helena? Were you an amateur?

Helena: Only at school. When I left, I got a scholarship to D.A.D.A.

[The Definitive Academy of Dramatic Art.—S. W.]

Self: Was that a good thing?

Helena: Well, it depends how you look at it. I had a very good time there, and made quite a lot of friends. But I don't think I learned anything—anything really useful, I mean.

Lucia: That's what they all say.

Helena: It's true, you know. We had classes in absolutely everything—Make-up, Painting Scenery, Mime, Elocution, History of Costume—oh, the lot. But I've forgotten all of it, and I don't think I'm any the worse off.

Self: Weren't the teachers good?

Lucia: Some of them were. One of them was sweet. She had been a star in the days of Tree and Alexander, and knew everything there was to know about Pinero. We were always learning scenes out of *Mrs. Tanqueray* or *Trelawney of the Wells* for her to criticise. But of course nobody does Pinero very much nowadays.

Roland: I think it's a great shame.

Lucia: And the mime teacher was fun. She had worked with Reinhardt and was extremely intense. She used to make us give our impressions of subjects like an Oaktree Being Struck by Lightning, or a River in Full Spate. It was all good exercise, but I can't say it came in very useful when I was at Oldham Rep.

Self: What about the practical side—stage management and so on?

Lucia: That was fun too. D.A.D.A. has a complete theatre which was built at enormous expense and had its foundation stone laid by Royalty. It's perfectly equipped from top to toe, and we had the time of our lives with the switchboard and the convertible stage. But it was rather a comedown when I got my first job as an A.S.M. at Ilfracombe. Have you ever seen the switchboard there?

Roland: I didn't know they had one.

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Self: In other words, what you learned at D.A.D.A. didn't turn out to have much to do with the professional theatre?

Helena: No, I'm afraid it didn't. Luckily I was on a scholarship, but a lot of boys and girls pay through the nose to go there—or rather their parents do. Somebody ought to tell them.

Lucia: But it did help you to get a job, didn't it? Didn't you win a prize at the public show?

Helena: How did you know? I never tell anyone. In fact, after the first few times, I even stopped telling agents I'd been there. It had such an unfortunate effect on them.

Self: But some schools are good, surely. Anthony, didn't you go to one?

Anthony: Yes. Isabella Pontefract. It's for children, and I was sent there when I was five. You see, my parents were both on the stage.

Self: So you're really the oldest professional of all of us.

Anthony: I suppose so. I got my first job when I was twelve, in *Where the Rainbow Ends*, and I've been working ever since—touch wood.

Lucia: How marvellous!

Anthony: Yes, I suppose it is, in a way. But I sometimes think I would like to have been something else—an engineer perhaps or an architect. But I never really got the chance to find out about anything else except the theatre.

Lucia: Everything else is incredibly dull.

Helena: Yes, that's what we all tell ourselves, but I sometimes feel we only say it to keep up our courage when we're out of work. After all, a qualified engineer or architect is pretty certain of making a living, but a qualified actor, if there is such a thing, can't even be sure of getting one job, and when he's got it, he doesn't know how long it will last.

Lucia: But it's all such fun—isn't it?

Helena: Oh, it's fun all right, because we're all in the same boat, and it's no disgrace to be unemployed. But it's also pretty discouraging, especially when your parents disapprove, as mine do most of the time.

Lucia: My father does. But Mummy was the original Mrs. Worthington.

Helena: My parents still think the theatre is a sink of immorality. I've tried to tell them that until you're a star, you simply don't have time for loose living; but they won't listen.

Roland: It's rather sad really, isn't it? Because when you do become a star nowadays, you're really supposed to be a model of respectability and just an Ordinary Girl at Heart. In fact, if anybody goes into the theatre nowadays in order to indulge their libido, they're in for a howling disappointment, aren't they?

Lucia: They certainly are. If anybody lives in sin, it's usually for economic reasons. In fact it's really smarter nowadays to be married, and much more commercial.

Self: You're beginning to make the theatre sound a little dull.

Helena: I suppose it is, from that point of view—at least, compared with what one hears it used to be. Nobody drinks champagne out of chorus girls' slippers any more. In fact you're lucky if you get gin in a tooth-glass in the star's dressing-room.

Roland: Perhaps we all take ourselves too seriously. There's very little temperament and throwing of scenes nowadays, is there?

Anthony: Because most of us know that if we cause trouble, there'll be somebody else waiting to walk into the job. So we just keep quiet and make the best of it.

Lucia: I once walked out of a club theatre; but I walked back in again about ten minutes later.

Helena: Oh dear, how humiliating!

Lucia: Yes, wasn't it? But, you see, I think we're all slaves—underpaid and underprivileged slaves. If anybody gets a raw deal, it's the performers, and there's practically nothing we can do about it.

Self: What about Equity?

(*Derisive laughter all round*)

Helena: Equity lays down a lot of rules, but they don't do much about enforcing them. It's very easy for an unscrupulous man-

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agement to exploit artists and get away with it.

Lucia: I'll say! What about ——? After one of his shows had flopped and no one had been paid, not even the authors, Equity advised all members to refuse to work for him. But when he offered me a part in his next show, do you think I refused? How could I? I was stony broke. We ran a month, and he still owes me a fortnight's salary. But what can you do?

Roland: I know. When I was in ——, I was supposed to be playing a small part and I got a correspondingly small salary. By the time we had finished rehearsing, I was understudying two other parts and walking on in practically every scene. But did I get a raise? Did I hell!

Helena: And what about club theatres?

Self: Yes, what about them? We might as well deal with them now. Are they a Good Thing?

Anthony: I think they're torture, and I hope I never have to work in one again. One of my worst nightmares is that I'm back at the —— doing another intimate revue.

Self: But surely they provide a Shop Window for beginners. In my own case, for instance. . . .

Roland: You were lucky. Occasionally you get a club theatre run by the right people, with a definite policy, and they give it a good reputation. But most of them simply put on a show for whoever's fool enough to supply the backing and they don't care particularly whether it's good or not as long as they're getting their rent. When I think of some of the piffle I've appeared in at club theatres, I blush all over!

Helena: And look at the conditions you have to put up with. I was in a ghastly new play at the —— last year. There were fifteen of us in the cast and we all used the same dressing-room with a curtain down the middle. You could only reach the stage by means of a very rickety step-ladder, and there were three changes of set. The congestion was simply frantic, and if there'd been a fire, we'd all have gone up in smoke. And for this we were being paid the princely sum of five pounds a week—and no rehearsal money.

Anthony: At least you were on a salary. I once worked in a club theatre show for a percentage. The play was disastrous and the last week of the run we were all handed eight-and-tenpence each. I know we're supposed to be in this profession for the love of it, but that strained my love rather too far.

Self: But, Lucia, you got your first job at the Beacon. Don't you have a soft spot for club theatres?

Lucia: I've got a soft spot for anyone that will employ me, even though the job may turn out to be hell. That's the trouble with being an actress. It's awfully difficult to have ideals, and stick to them.

Self: But I suppose you all have secret ambitions you want to fulfil—certain parts you want to play. What about you, Helena? Is it Cleopatra or Sadie Thompson?

Helena: Both, as a matter of fact. And Lady Macbeth, Medea, Millamant, and about a hundred other parts. But actually it's not the part that concerns me so much as the director, the management, and the theatre. You can play Hedda Gabler in rep. in King's Langley and it doesn't mean a thing, but do it for H.M. Tennent's at the Globe with Peter Brook directing and then you really have got somewhere. And you needn't be playing the lead. Just a small part in a set-up like that would be enough to make my mouth water.

Roland: But how often do any of us get the chance to work with a good director under first-class conditions?

Anthony: And how many really good directors are there? I can think of about four.

Roland: Really, I think the only first-class work being done in this country is at places like Stratford or the Old Vic (when it's good) and one or two of the better reps. They're the only places that have any sort of tradition or atmosphere. Everywhere else it's just a mad commercial scramble, and you do what you can and hope for the best.

Helena: Yes, there's certainly not much in

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the way of guidance for the young actors and actresses or any sort of example or method to follow. That's one of the main troubles with places like D.A.D.A. You pick up a lot of unnecessary information and a few helpful hints, but it doesn't add up to any sort of method or make you part of any visible pattern.

Anthony: And once you've become a pro, nobody's going to bother to teach you anything any more. You've just got to follow your instincts and hope you can hold down a job.

Lucia: Isn't there something in America called Actors' Studio, where even big stars like Marlon Brando go to brush up their technique?

Helena: Yes. And it would be wonderful if someone could start the same sort of thing here. As it is, there's nowhere. Can you imagine Gielgud popping into D.A.D.A. to freshen up his diction?

Roland: Or any of us wanting to go back there, for that matter? Although I can hardly complain, as I've never claimed to be a straight actor in the first place.

Self: I gather you prefer to be in musicals, Roland?

Roland: Yes, if I can. But you know what the trouble is there—the American shows.

Self: But they've provided work for a lot of people, surely?

Roland: Certainly they have. If you like to get training in ballet and acrobatic dancing and learn to sing with an American accent, you could get work for years in the chorus. You only have to go to any American show in London to see the same old faces turning up amongst the singers and dancers. But do they ever get any further than that? Once in a blue moon an understudy takes over from an American star, and maybe plays the part on tour. But all he or she gets next time is another understudy to another American star. I know one girl who's done that so often that she's now decided to give the whole thing up and get married. And I don't blame her.

Self: What about English musicals?

Lucia: Well, they are rather few and far between. And they don't often employ large casts. Still, I must say things are looking up a bit. I can almost foresee the day when we'll reclaim Drury Lane. Perhaps by that time I'll be old enough to be a star.

Helena: What do you think is the average age for stars? About forty, I suppose, or would you put it higher?

Roland: I should say the later you become a star the better. In England they love middle-aged performers who go on giving the same performance in every single thing they do. The audience knows where they are with them, and everyone feels jolly cosy.

Anthony: But if you become a star too young, you're not really to be trusted. You're allowed one big success and then you have to be put away for a year or two in case you start getting ideas above your station.

Helena: I think these titles have something to do with it too. Being a star in England gives one almost more social status than artistic status. And it isn't really enough to be a good actor or actress; you've got to be a pillar of society as well. And no pillar of society is ever under forty.

Lucia: Oh dear, we've all got rather a long way to go, haven't we? Perhaps it would be better just to get married and forget all about a career.

Anthony: That's all very well for a girl.

Roland: Quite. All a man can do is change his job. And I can't imagine what else I would do. I've got a degree, which means I could perhaps become a school-teacher or go into advertising—both of which I should hate.

Self: You're all making the theatre sound very depressing. If it's really so awful, can you explain to me why so many people want to take it up?

Lucia: I told you. Everything else is so dull.

Helena: I don't think it's just that. I think it's because the theatre still has a good deal of glamour about it. It promises the sort of exciting existence which is denied in most other jobs. And theatre people are still a race apart, no matter how ordinary some of us pretend we really are.

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Roland: It's a kind of escape in a way, isn't it? The post-war world isn't nearly as much fun as it ought to be, and for people our age, being in the theatre does, to a certain extent, make up for that.

Lucia: And there are still enough extraordinary personalities in the theatre to give you quite a kick if you're lucky enough to work with one of them.

Helena: And of course people who aren't in the theatre still feel a certain amount of awe and fascination when they meet an actor or an actress, which gives one's ego quite a boost. Especially if one isn't working.

Lucia: And you must admit we do have a pretty free existence. I couldn't bear to be in a regular job, working from nine till five, living with my family in Wimbledon, and meeting the same people all the time. I don't say there aren't some crashing bores in the theatre, but at least you're only stuck with them for the run of the play.

Self: So on the whole, in spite of everything, you do think the theatre is more amusing than any other kind of life.

Anthony: And it's also more satisfying, when you're successful. We can complain about conditions and so on as much as we like, but give us one good part in one successful show and everything suddenly becomes perfect.

Self: I suppose it would help if there were more work to go round.

Helena: Of course. But it's mad to imagine one could ever have complete security, and the theatre's one industry where there never has been and never will be full employment.

Roland: Except in Russia. . . .

At this point everyone started talking about Russia and the discussion became completely irrelevant. I attempted to steer it back to England, and even got so far as introducing the subject of agents. But my four debaters became so acrimonious that I had to give them all drinks and put on gramophone records. I'm sure I have not explored my subject fully, and every actor has his own angle on it. It's easy enough to find out. Just ask one and he'll tell you.

Sandy Wilson

IV. THE CHANGING UNIVERSITY:

A Report on Cambridge Today

A UNIVERSITY is a live, multifarious, and changeable community whose behaviour-patterns will always elude definition. Its fashions of belief and conduct are random and unstable, never affecting everybody at once, and never analysable by statistics. Indeed, one intrinsic function of a university is precisely to contain many sorts and conditions. So we shall not easily find someone sufficiently involved yet also detached enough to observe such a place accurately in the round. A person deeply involved can offer only a personal miscellany, made up of facts, guesses, and partial ruminations about the changing scene in a single university. Such a mixture is bound to seem exaggerated and oversimplified and partisan, especially in a short article which concentrates on the sociology of undergraduate life and its recent mutations.

What is true for Cambridge might in any case be untrue elsewhere. Even Oxford is different. An Oxford education leads more seldom to first-class honours, but more easily to Parliament and the higher Civil Service. Oxford is more fashionable, and noticeably more dilettante and eccentric, while Cambridge is more scientific and protestant. The

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colleges at Oxford are less prosperous, their gardens less splendid. The dons at Cambridge are less brilliant but reputedly better paid and more leisured, and spend less time over port and conversation.

During the last twenty years the older universities have both of them moved far towards Redbrick, a direction symbolised by unexciting and efficient laboratory architecture. Under outside pressure, Cambridge has reluctantly become half as large again, though the planners were wrong to think that first-class students would increase anything like proportionately. Discipline is relaxed, and one wonders if the old claustral regulations can last out our time: but at least with fewer rules to break there is far less inclination to misbehave. The ratio between "professional instruction" and "education" has meanwhile altered alarmingly. Scientists almost predominate now, bridging the gap into a more technological age, and on an undergraduate level they permeate society with the novel and conspicuous tone of a cultural inferiority complex. Akin to this is the fact that, among seniors, fellows of colleges will soon be outnumbered by the rest, if indeed they are not so already; and this must affect the government and whole internal balance of the university.

THE social basis of the community has also quite changed. Once the stamping-ground of the gentry, Cambridge is now annually absorbing thousands of new men into the "Establishment." Only a few years ago at least one Tutor took pains to discover which of his pupils he should address as Esquire. But now the gilded youth have retreated, the have-a-good-timers with their champagne breakfasts and parties at Newmarket are swamped, and the university again fulfils its old function of promoting an osmotic assimilation between the classes. Only one important element in the new ruling classes in fact escapes, the trade-union leader—and society may be the loser when tomorrow's Ernest Bevin is creamed off (as he will be) with a scholarship. For the rest, the university acts like a public school in ironing out creases and accents. Its members quickly take on the local protective colouring in order to become accepted. Many a well-bred young gentleman, finding himself in a college without enough of his own kind to set the *ton*, camouflages himself by giving up some outward manifestations of his gentility —the cloth cap, the rolled umbrella, and regimental tie: his compeers may scorn his failure to adapt if he follows the Beagles for example, or joins that one Cambridge concession to an American "frat"—the Pitt club. From the other end of the scale, there is less of the aggressive inverted snobbery which gushes out in advanced politics and bad table manners: people unprotestingly move upwards from watching soccer to watching rugger, and gradually learn not to exclude an Etonian automatically from intellectual and other societies.

The system of grants has revolutionised social and economic life. Among the poorest are those too well-off to benefit from public money, and who must yet keep up appearances without stooping too often to vacation employment. The taxpayer supports the majority, many of them in better circumstances than at home, yet in return exercises little control—except, oddly, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Freshmen arrive to find their shoes cleaned, their beds made, their meals sometimes served by waiters, the washing-up done, and themselves even occasionally called "sir." An "adequate" grant is commonly expected as of right, as is even a vacation abroad; and an "adequate" job and a degree are looked upon as due from society. Some half of the undergraduates have not chosen their career, but all ostentatiously betray a secure confidence in unlimited welfare for present and future.

This sense of security goes along with a distinctly more adult behaviour. Ex-servicemen from the war left behind them habits of greater freedom, greater responsibility, greater serious-mindedness. There is less schoolboy jargon now, more drinking but less drunkenness, more dancing, more sex (Newnham and Girton never had it so good), and much more film-going. Most under-

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graduates meet the wider world occasionally through vacation jobs, usually once a year. The majority are beginning again to come up straight from school, but in any case National Service in itself teaches them surprisingly little of other people and the world. Some emerge improved from the services, some quite otherwise; but in general the two streams of schoolboy and ex-serviceman frequently become indistinguishable. The number of research students reading for a higher degree has now trebled, and constitutes one-tenth of the population. Being much neglected by the university, they often mix in and make undergraduate society more adult.

LOOKED at from inside, under this veneer of maturity university life covers an intense, competitive period when people learn not only how to get good academic results, but in general how to succeed, how to fit in with others, what to believe. Many are for the first time wholly unprotected by their home environment—it is bad form for parents to intrude here, and some families therefore distrust and misunderstand the whole process, however much they appreciate an almost foolproof investment in success.

Looked at from the outside, a university rather seems an artificial pocket of serenity, an enclave protected by grants and domestic cossetting, where one can stop and stare before being engulfed in the chores and the frenzy of everyday life. Not that it ever proves altogether an ivory tower. There is a genuine anxiety to engage with the wheels of modern society. But it is participation on the fringe, and there is an equally genuine bewilderment about what angle to slice into the big world, what foothold to seek there. This is a last brief period of gestation, in which some degree of escape is a requisite; and the matrix is a don's world, itself at one remove from real events. The literature of escape bulks significantly in donnish book-clubs; and certain professors still try to ignore the telephone, as they will be the last to surrender to TV.

Substantially more than half the undergraduates take this escape to the point of being unconcerned and complacent about party politics. The Conservative association is easily the largest active group, but its best activity is bloodless and insipid. Ten years ago the Left was uppermost, but today there is no unemployment to sway the political knight-errants, and the bogey of fascism has yielded to an enemy *à gauche*. The world outside is prosperous. There is nothing obvious to tilt against except its materialism (hence the shift from socialism to religion). The hydrogen bomb is too huge and incomprehensible to be the catalyst of strong practical views: enthusiasts and disapprovers alike stand amazed at their own incompetence to talk about it meaningfully. Likewise debates at the Union have never recaptured their old glamour: debating-points are no longer found to be a proper substitute for argument, and old-style set-piece dialectics seem irrelevant. Rumour states that the Communists have recently doubled and can now be counted in two figures; also that *Cambridge Left*, currently the best political journalism, is always sold out. But this looks more like the first swallow of a cloud-cuckoo summer.

Contact with real life or politics is hardly a reason for coming to Cambridge. Perhaps some few still come to seek the bubble reputation on the Union floor. Others wishfully aim to enter the corporate life of clubs and activities, and to make this their reason for existence. But most are incorrigible individualists, who join a few societies with a healthy (or unhealthy) lack of enthusiasm. They take for granted that Cambridge is a high-road to becoming that mediocre object, a well-rounded, balanced "type." Optimistically they assume that by residing the statutory number of nights their minds will broaden by an automatic kind of photosynthesis. Freshmen first appear in a bewildered daze at their success in having arrived. But then this heady excitement is gradually dashed by the unimaginative level of talk and instruction. In their genuine disillusionment they receive little help from above, and a pernicious boredom supervenes for those who are too uncombative and uninquisitive to unload this difficult rift of

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its ore. After the five-guinea handshake from their Tutor they soon lose patience with their teachers, and settle down in the clientele of some third-year star or in the mutual comfort of like-minded friends.

Undergraduates were not much interested in the wordy debate on the nature and purpose of the university which flared up several years ago. They themselves are birds of passage who take it all in their stride without long-term loyalties or heart-searchings of a theoretical order. After some initial surprise, they uncomprehendingly accept that the university is not primarily interested in them—Mr. C. P. Snow's high-table was quite unmindful of their existence. Their formal education is based on being smoked-over once a week. The medieval system of lectures is still in full blast, but lectures are easily avoided and their avoidance may even be made to seem a sign of sophistication and critical acumen (this is apparently more noticeable at Oxford). The engineer will attend some eighteen lectures a week; the classicist more likely three; and the arts student who lacks inner compulsion or excitement may find that only the yearly day of reckoning with the examiner makes necessary that six-hour day which is about the general average.

And yet universities, for good or ill, are surely more intense, serious, and purposeful than twenty years ago. There is more absorbing of information, and inevitably more vocational training, less stretching of the mind and less contemplation. Only a minority have time to read a novel in term time, and certainly it is a minority among the scientists who value leisure so much that they try and circumvent the curriculum to obtain it. Those who can escape domestic distractions now have a fourth term in the long summer vacation. But real leisure, which in a creative sense is at the centre of true education, cannot so easily be won. Conversation, which is another index of both leisure and reflection, seems for both dons and their pupils to revolve less on the *summum bonum* than on present and tangible goods; and even more on personalities and gossip. This may have always been so, but, to judge from nocturnal lights in rooms, there is less late-night talk than in the days of Lowes Dickinson and E. M. Forster. Or perhaps those days never materially existed.

At the risk of romanticising the past, the present generation can be called less gay and less adventurous. There are fewer eccentrics, because with more freedom there is less reason for eccentricity. There is less rowdiness and more self-discipline, less high spirits and, thank heaven, less practical joking. No doubt this low temperature compares quite well with the hectic, jazzed-up pressures of a transatlantic world; but the cloister tends to produce only a cloistered virtue. There is plenty of curiosity, but insufficient indignation. Shyness, the national vice-virtue, comes out in a shyness of heresy. The infectious habits of group behaviour, as they house-train the mind and character, expunge some healthy idiosyncrasies and originality, and against his college's 600-year-old tradition the young man in a hurry will bark his shins in vain. Already before his arrival this young man will have been chemically processed, because inexcusable university requirements force schoolboys into a mould of ever higher specialisation; so that for the generally-educated, untypical, eccentric man who acts as leaven in the lump we have to look increasingly to people from overseas—examples from Turkey, Eire, America, and Ceylon leap to the mind. Perhaps this is not unconnected with the fact that the Union now votes solidly for things as they are, for the government, the established Church, the trade unions, the independent schools. Even a conservative can deplore this, for education demands the clash of opposites.

Such intellectual strife would be easier if rival schools of thought contended shrilly in open forum for the mastery. But the various disciplines are shy of polemics and pugnacity, and by tacit agreement work jointly for a quiet life—though again Oxford provides several notorious exceptions. Academics are reluctant to preach, either because they have no message at all, or because their mes-

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sage is a positive scepticism, a teaching of how to think and not what to think. At least this is their excuse. The hungry sheep therefore look up and are not fed; or perhaps they simply are not eating, which is not quite the same thing; or perhaps, when they ask for bread, they are told to go and eat cake, and are thus stimulated rather than nourished. Sophisticated palates prefer the high seasoning of "stimulus" to more solid tissue-building nourishment, and the successful lecturers are those who know how to provide it. Paradoxically, the cry goes up simultaneously for more preaching, in the hope that what is false may be put to the worse in a free and open encounter. Scepticism has clearly gone too far when the voice of the preacher is altogether dumb and when it is fashionable to approve of nothing. But preaching must be balanced by more irreverence and disrespect. More heretics are needed to set a bad example, like Dr. Leavis; perhaps also more synoptic characters like Bertrand Russell, brave enough to hazard an integration of ideas. If there is no strife there must at least be integration. The university is, by statute, "a place of education, religion, learning, and research"; but in practice these are disintegrated compartments, religion interfering with education, education with religion, and research with both. In practice, therefore, the university has surprisingly little positive effect on its charges. It is merely a comfortable, beautiful place where spontaneously they wean themselves from their families and live as individuals, undominated, in a hand-picked society where by the thrust and abrasion of emulous minds education may accidentally result. Possibly it would be extravagant to ask for more.

IF THERE is one Cambridge tradition more striking than any other, history may choose that which stemmed back through Keynes, Russell, and G. E. Moore to the Victorian "Apostles," than which this present century shows nothing more conspicuous and educative. These were the *Davidsbündler* who fought the contemporary Philistines; they were agnostics in the wider sense, who also crusaded against crusading, who did not believe very much in belief, but rather in humility, laughter, and the individual. The same tradition lingers on through last year's Cambridge issue of the *Twentieth Century*. As it is an aristocratic tradition, it is not strong among the younger generation except with the cleverest. If students today are still uncommitted to a cause, it is unwillingly. However much they are frightened away from a narrowing faith like Marxism or fundamentalist Christianity, in fact they are searching earnestly for a philosophy of life, for simplicity, for an Explanation, an intelligible, integrating purpose. Simplicity thus blasphemously becomes as important as truth, for simplicity can at least be grasped. There is a natural fear of the complexity of things, and, as politics for instance has become so intricate and remote, they have turned their backs on political disputation. The current fashion is rather to probe the human soul and its depravity. Mr. Forster talks of "the present rise of obscurantism among intellectuals," and indeed the wide world would be shocked to see how few of what we should call intellectuals there are in a university. The general tone is, and perhaps has never been more than, firmly middle-brow—even if the stock affectation is to simulate a higher forehead than you possess (a fact of the utmost educational value).

In donnish society the prevalent temper is either one of unbelief or else a characteristic brand of Laodicean Christian agnosticism. Undergraduates on the other hand, more anyhow than formerly, find in original sin and the atonement a simpler and more comprehensive answer. Religious messages do at least exist as messages, and are embattled and exciting and fill up an uncomfortable gap in the soul; though it is a monitory sign that this religious revival has little foundation of dogma. A college poll recently showed only forty-four per cent who now admitted to not practising a religion, and over a third attend church or chapel with fair regularity. It is obvious that religious life is much more intense here than in their home worlds; and

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Billy Graham spoke, it was claimed, to the largest audience the university had ever known. Anglican prestige is still high, but the smaller bodies are particularly active, especially the fundamentalist CICCU and the Catholics. An interesting study might be made of university religions to investigate their geographical and class attachments and to scrutinise their mutual jealousies and bickering. Billy Graham, for instance, ruffled the *bien pensants* by convincing many would-be believers that the basis of Christianity is unreason; and the primitive carrot and stick which he brandished over the university were carefully explained away by college chaplains the following Sunday. Certain sects have the reputation of being righteous overmuch and overconscious that they themselves need no repentance, and this has possibly weakened the general religious enthusiasm of several years ago. But there is no doubt that the university has gone back to a historically more normal situation in which metaphysical explanations are not derided but can take their chance with the rest.

THOSE who rather prefer to seek their salvation in literature seem by comparison to be having a thin time. These new *précieux* belabour their fellows for "moral bankruptcy" and for ignoring poetry's "vital significance"; but this protest falls on stony ground. The literary set are by nature more clique-ridden than most. All wish to edit a magazine, and then, as editors, have the face to complain of the paucity and poverty of contributions. They denounce each other's writing as forced, artificial, and ungenuine—not without cause. For though the spirit is willing, and the technique painstaking, they have nothing to say. Nor would they willingly take refuge in any existing tradition, even a localised or personal one: the very sensation of following other people seems to generate a feeling of contamination and shame. Evidently the young writer neither has the ear of his generation nor speaks for them. But if fewer people today write even secret poetry, more play musical instruments (especially in vogue is the guitar); and many more act. In the drama one can assume an antic disposition, live out a life which is deeper and more concentrated, escape from one's own drabness, and say things finely and loudly which one either dare not, or knows not how to, say otherwise. Acting and religion share between them the time once spent in politics and literature.

Fashions change quickly where there is a turnover of society every three years. One of the most powerful forces in history is that people become bored so quickly. What is in, what is out, what is the newly smart thing to do, these are particularly telling questions in a community where one's first duty on arrival is to merge and behave as an undergraduate. Plus-fours give way in turn to grey flannels, to corduroys, to blue jeans, to cavalry twill, to black jeans, and each successively carries its own compulsion. Some of the more basic rhythms, however, stay the same. About twenty per cent still confess to playing games on five afternoons a week; ten per cent have put violent exercise behind them; the traditional distractions of rowing and a virtuous attachment ruin their regular quota of examination results; the same amount of time is spent scrabbling for place and position, entering the right coterie, getting to know the right people for winning your blue or becoming President of the Union; the same industry and idleness, genius and folly, jostle hugger-mugger in much the same proportion to produce an education which with all its faults is still admirable. The surprising thing may be that the real Cambridge goes on so much the same underneath the change in outward habiliments. But that would be another story.

D. Mack Smith

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Richard Lowenthal

The Repudiation of Stalinism

Can the Party Co-exist with the People?

"Nero, too, was a product of his epoch. Yet after he perished his statues were smashed and his name was scraped off everything. The vengeance of history is more terrible than the vengeance of the most powerful General Secretary. I venture to think that this is consoling."
(From Leo Trotsky's *Stalin*.)

OURS is an epoch of unique historical events, most of them horrible. The Great Purge of 1936–8, with its liquidation of the old Bolshevik élite ordered in cold blood two decades after the revolution, and covered by a slimy flood of lies and forgeries was one of those events which revealed to a whole generation new vistas of man's capacity for evil. Despite the above comparison with the tyrant of another age, quoted from the book over whose unfinished manuscript Trotsky was battered to death by Stalin's emissary, the present massive denunciation of the initiator of those crimes and the "scraping off" of his falsifications from the record is no less unique; for this destruction of a myth is carried out by Stalin's closest surviving accomplices, within a system of one-party rule whose very existence depends on the pseudo-religion it incessantly purveys. This is indeed the authentic vengeance of History, working through blind agents who know not what they do.

Yet the spectacle of the spokesman of the Stalinist old guard disclosing in secret session the harm done to the Communist Party, the army, and the Soviet people by the "mistakes" of his late master, and naïvely trying to base his own authority and that of his colleagues on the fact that they were powerless to prevent what they now denounce, is only one aspect of the drama of this twentieth congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. There is also, on a vaster stage, the transformation in the lives and hopes of 200 million people who are now allowed to catch their first glimpse of the Promised Land after wandering through the desert for almost forty years—the return of hundreds of thousands of deportees from the labour camps, the rise in peasant incomes, the first steps towards a higher output of consumer goods and a shortening of working hours. And there is finally the position of the Soviet Union as a great world power with all that implies for the prospects of peace and war, and hence for the survival of us all.

I

DURING the three years since Stalin's death, almost every criticism of Stalin's methods and policies now voiced has been implicitly foreshadowed in the action of his heirs. We have long noticed the drastic reduction in the adulation of the late dictator and in the references to his writings as a final source of authority, coupled with an increasing emphasis both on Lenin and on the collective wisdom of the Party. We have

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watched the sudden dismantling of Stalin's personal secretariat and the disappearance of its members, the calling off of the "doctors' purge" which had begun in the last months of his life, the systematic downgrading of the secret police and their subordination to the control of the Party, the quiet rehabilitation of some of the surviving old Bolsheviks as well as of victims of pre-war and post-war purges in some East European states. We have seen the reconciliation with Tito's Yugoslavia based on an open apology for the unjust accusations hurled against it and the economic injuries caused to it by the hostility of the Soviet bloc since 1948. And we have followed the silent liquidation of Stalin's gigantic projects for the "transformation of nature," the admission of the terrible backwardness of Soviet agriculture and the efforts to overcome it by various new policies, and the gradual turning away from forced labour as the only recruiting method for remote areas.

Up to now, however, all these reforms and policy changes had been carried out without open disavowal of Stalin: he was corrected piecemeal and allowed gradually to fade into the background, and where explicit attacks on past mistakes could not be avoided, these were ascribed to Beria. Only now has Stalin's authority been openly demolished—first on a few specific points in Anastas Mikoyan's public speech, and then by the systematic reassessment of Stalin's "merits and errors" delivered in secret session by Khrushchev in a speech which is now being used as the basis of Communist "re-education" both in the Soviet Union and abroad. It is because of this open break with "Stalinism" that Mikoyan could rightly describe the congress as the most important one since Lenin's time. For in addition to the denunciation of many of Stalin's individual crimes, the reassessment has touched the central core of Stalinism as a doctrine and a method of rule.

The Bolshevik Party is unique in having maintained its dictatorship for decades after the completion of the original revolutionary task. Stalin's method of securing this domination and warding off a "Thermidor"—i.e. the shaking off of the revolutionary Party régime by the new upper stratum born of the revolution—took the form of the "permanent revolution from above": on the one hand, amalgamation of the ruling party with the new administrative and economic bureaucracy; on the other, the systematic use of state power by that party to bring about ever new social upheavals (typically in the process of forced collectivisation and in the mass deportations of the purge era). The Party maintained its hold upon power by refusing to let the people settle down. Judging reality by reference to a dogmatically presumed Communist goal of social development, and finding its actual evolution tending in quite a different direction, it kept discovering an unending succession of "class enemies" who had to be destroyed by terrorist means.

This, and this alone, was the historic core of Stalinism—quite apart from any excesses and personal pathological traits. The dictatorship justified its existence by stressing the alleged necessity of a permanent "struggle" against the ever renewed growth of "capitalist tendencies"—it lived in a constant state of war with its own people. The compulsive urge to treat every kind of economic offence as high treason, every internal resistance as an "agency" of the capitalist besiegers, the general spy hysteria and absence of legal security followed from this basic situation. At bottom, any attempt at a "break with Stalinism" entails the question whether the régime can terminate this domestic state of war and still retain power—whether the Party can make peace with the Russian people and continue to govern.

THE epoch-making feature of the twentieth congress is that it has openly raised precisely this question—which is not to say that it has, by any means, solved it. True, this was not done in the speeches that have so far been published, nor could we have learnt it from the Western versions of Mr. Khrushchev's "secret" reassessment of Stalin. But all the authoritative statements since made on the subject by non-Russian Com-

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munist leaders—notably the article published by Walter Ulbricht, the East German party secretary, on March 4th (reprinted in *Pravda* on the following day, the anniversary of Stalin's death), the statement by Palmiro Togliatti to the Italian Central Committee published on March 15th, Harry Pollit's article in the *Daily Worker* of March 24th, and the article by Jerzy Morawski of the Polish Party secretariat published in *Trybuna Ludu* of March 27th—all base their criticism of Stalin's policies and methods of rule on a condemnation of his thesis of "the intensification of the class struggle in the Socialist state, even after the complete victory over the capitalists and landlords had been established." This thesis, first pronounced by Stalin in his speech to the Central Committee of March 3rd, 1937, which inaugurated the "Yezhov era," the worst period of the great purge, had according to Togliatti led to "a desperate prospect of unending mutual persecution of one part of society by the other, even within the organisations of the working class"—and in practice to "suspicion in all directions and in all circumstances." According to Pollitt, it was also the direct cause for the placing of the security services above the Soviet government and above the Party, which enabled them "to make false charges against comrades and violate the Soviet constitution and Soviet laws."*

Though this revision of Stalin's central doctrine was not yet publicly proclaimed at the congress, it was tacitly implied in the absence, in all the hundreds of pages of published speeches, of any reference to the need for a political struggle against the "internal enemy." It is the lack of this "dialectical" element that lends to the congress's discussion of domestic affairs such a strikingly technical and quasi non-political character: we are told much about tasks and accomplishments, successes and failures, models to imitate and examples of backwardness, old and new methods, initiative and bureaucratic routine—but there is nothing about the embittered resistance of class enemies, no appeals to "revolutionary vigilance" (except in relation to the arms budget), no calls for "merciless struggle." Nor is this merely a matter of terminology: to the change-over from an ideological to a technical vocabulary there corresponds the transition from administrative compulsion as the main instrument of economic policy to the introduction of such improved economic incentives as higher purchase prices to raise farm output, gradual shortening of working hours as a stimulus to more intense work, etc.

This policy of substituting the economic carrot for the administrative stick was, as we know, introduced shortly after Stalin's death. It was the essence of the "new course" inaugurated by Malenkov's speech of August 1953. We have grown used to identifying it with Malenkov, especially in connection with the promise of a "steep increase" in the output of consumer goods. And we have come to regard Khrushchev as its chief opponent—as the leading advocate of continued priority for heavy industry and intensified pressure upon the peasants with the aim of preparing a "third agrarian revolution" that would nationalise the kolkhozes, a step urged in Stalin's last pamphlet as a precondition for the "transition to Communism." Malenkov's resignation last year and Khrushchev's evidently growing ascendancy were therefore widely interpreted as the end of the "new course" and the start of a fresh period of intensified internal class struggle, a further turn of the screw of "permanent revolution."

That interpretation, however, has not been borne out by the speeches at the twentieth congress or by the events which preceded it. The price concessions to the peasants have

* Be it noted in passing that the rejection of Stalin's theory for the entire period after the destruction of the landlords and capitalists implies a condemnation also of his *methods* in achieving forced collectivisation by the "liquidation of the kulaks as a class" and not only of the later purges; but this conclusion has not so far been explicitly drawn in public, and all official statements continue to list the collectivisation of Soviet agriculture along with the industrialisation of the country as one of Stalin's abiding merits and to confine practical criticism to the period starting in 1934.

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not been revoked, although so long as consumer goods output lags behind they are bound to result in inflationary tendencies. The pace of investment has inevitably slowed somewhat in comparison with the Stalin era, and the planned increase in consumer goods output, although more modest than that of producer goods, is considerable in the majority of branches. Khrushchev's "virgin soils" campaign has more than doubled the proportion of land directly owned by the state, but it still represents only a modest percentage of the total, and anyhow the campaign has suddenly come to a halt. Attempts to hasten the "transition to Communism" in accordance with Stalin's final prescription, by instituting direct exchange of goods between factories and kolkhozes instead of market transactions, were sharply condemned by Mikoyan at the congress because this would interfere with rational cost calculation—now proclaimed the most urgent task of all. The most important measure of farm policy during the past few years turns out to have been neither the virgin soils campaign nor yet the campaign to grow maize, but the "decentralisation" of agricultural planning which allows the kolkhoz administrators greater latitude for independent, rational management. So far from representing the liquidation of the "new course," these measures amount to its continuation, modified by propaganda campaigns, but retaining its reliance on incentives rather than repression. They reflect a recognition of the fact that as the Soviet Union no longer disposes of practically unlimited reserves of manpower, its future economic expansion now depends primarily on raising the productivity of each individual worker and peasant, and that in consequence there is far less scope for the employment of repressive measures in economic life. Here we have the real motive force that is driving the Soviet leaders beyond Stalinism.

IT IS tempting to sum up the "line" of the twentieth congress as Malenkovism under Khrushchev's leadership. That, however, would be to overlook an essential point: while Malenkov proclaimed the new course in his capacity of Prime Minister at a Soviet congress, Khrushchev explains his policy as first secretary of the Party at a gathering of the latter. By the manner of his public pronouncements, as well as by his preference for governmental functions, Malenkov sought to harness in his favour the subterranean counter-pressure accumulated within Soviet society against the rule of a party which, under Stalin's personal reign and under the intra-party terror of his secret police, had long become a lifeless mechanism, and whose popularity had reached its nadir. By subordinating the secret police to the Party, and by rehabilitating many of its victims, Khrushchev on the contrary is trying to revive the Party and to allot it the leading rôle in the conduct of the new economic policy—so much so that he urges the Party functionaries to acquire business and technical experience and even seeks to give them a financial interest in the production results of their respective regions. Malenkov tacitly ignored Stalinist doctrine because he intended to reduce the Party to a secondary position; Khrushchev explicitly revises the doctrine because he aims at preserving the Party's rule by making peace, in the Party's name, with the Russian people.

This experiment certainly does not correspond to Khrushchev's original intentions, as witness his past record as Stalin's representative during the Ukrainian purges, and as the originator of the abortive attempt to found agro-towns. But the pressure of the social forces in the new, industrially developed Russia has apparently become so strong—notably since the destruction of the secret police's former hegemony in the course of the struggle among Stalin's heirs—that the last-ditch defender of Party orthodoxy has had to offer them incentives, at least in the economic field, which differ little from those a political agnostic like Malenkov was willing to grant.

It is typical of Khrushchev's eagerness to rehabilitate the Party by demonstrating its functional usefulness that he has undertaken to do away with the bifurcation of authority

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implied by the parallel operation of managers on the one hand, and "political sections" dealing with ideological matters on the other. First these sections were abolished in the case of the machine-tractor stations, and the district secretaries of the Party charged instead with "assisting" the M.T.S. by regular visits. Now Khrushchev has gone a step further by proclaiming the general uselessness of "political sections" in industry, on the grounds that Party functionaries are to take a hand directly in the productive process. This leads immediately to the problem of the "political deputies" (the former political commissars) in the army. Here too, as was shown by Marshal Zhukov's speech at a meeting of Party members of the Moscow military district before the Party congress, the tendency is to strengthen the authority of the commanding officer (who is a Party member anyhow) under the control of the regional Party organisation, and to deprecate the kind of political schooling which is kept separate from military training. The elevation of Zhukov to candidate-membership of the Party presidium, and the simultaneous disappearance from the central committee of the heads of the army and navy political departments, can only be regarded as confirmations of this trend; the same goes for the destruction of the legend of "Stalin the infallible war leader," and for the rehabilitation of the generals he killed. It is difficult to think of a more striking symbol of the attempt to preserve the Party's rule by reconciling it with the living forces of Soviet society.

II

THE purpose of the whole experiment is to save the Party dictatorship, not to dissolve it. There is of course no question of democratising the régime, or even of permitting a free, public discussion of political issues. In consequence, there can be no question either of returning to "intra-party democracy," for under the system of single-party control this would lead to factional groupings giving expression to the various conflicting interests within Soviet society. The official doctrine of "class-struggle from above" may have been abandoned, but the classes themselves continue to exist, and so do the pressures seeking expression at the political level.

Given this state of affairs, the "return to Leninist norms of party life" has a strictly limited meaning. Under Lenin, the legal existence of opposition groups within the Party was tolerated just as long as legal opposition parties were tolerated: both came to an end with the Kronstadt rising of March 1921 and the introduction of the New Economic Policy. The prohibition of intra-party factions was justified by Lenin himself at the tenth Party congress in March 1921, on the grounds that such groupings would become the vehicles of conflicting class interests; and although Party discussions over rival "platforms" continued nonetheless, not only under Lenin but until 1928 even under Stalin, their eventual suppression was the logical consequence of the earlier prohibition of factional groupings, and basically of the single-party system as such. The delay was simply due to the interval between Lenin's death and the concentration of power and authority in the hands of a single recognised successor. If conflicts within the ruling group are not to become public, final authority must be vested in a single leader strong enough to prevent an appeal to wider circles; the stability of single-party dictatorship thus requires the individual dictator.

Contrary to the "collective leadership" myth, everything we know suggests that three years after Stalin's death this position of power within the Party has largely been attained by Khrushchev. The conduct of the twentieth congress and the elections to the central Party organs, following various personal shifts during the preparatory period, all go to show that he has effective control of the Party machine. At the congress itself, no differences of opinion were publicly expressed; Khrushchev did not bother to sum up after the debate on his report, and indeed the great majority of speakers parroted their themes in the true Stalinist manner—except that their servile praise was reserved not for

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one man, but for the collective wisdom of the central committee. All those functionaries whom Khrushchev, in his capacity as first secretary, had previously dislodged from their regional positions, disappeared automatically from the new central committee, whose election took place unanimously; each of its members and alternates—now numbering over 250—consequently knows to whom he owes his position. Apart from Khrushchev the central committee has seven secretaries, of whom five were appointed since his rise to power; four of them, in addition to himself, belong to the new presidium of eleven members and six candidates. Moreover, Khrushchev has acquired a new stronghold in the shape of the newly established bureau of the central committee for Russia proper, while the reorganised machine of the secret police is supervised on behalf of the Party by his subordinate Aristov, a member of the central secretariat, but *not* of the presidium—in other words a man solely responsible to Khrushchev himself.

This being the organisational set-up, the more frequent plenary sessions of the central committee appear as a means of subjecting the other members of the presidium to Khrushchev's control, rather than as a forum of democratic debate. What does seem likely is that Khrushchev is willing to permit genuine discussions *within* the presidium, much as Stalin did until 1934, and that—also like Stalin in his earlier days—he does not aim at the complete elimination of unsuccessful rivals popular with the Party membership or the people, but on the contrary welcomes their public support of his policy and even their participation in carrying it out.

THE reality veiled by the talk about "collective leadership," then, is not a sharing of power within the presidium, but a different *manner* of exercising control. What is being attempted is a transition from arbitrary despotism, not to oligarchy let alone to democracy, but rather to a kind of enlightened absolutism: the new boss seeks to concentrate power in his hands no less than the old one did, but he is willing to listen to arguments, to learn from experience, to employ influential counsellors. Yet this change of method results not just from the passing mood or tactics of a dictator who still has to consolidate his grip: it is the necessary corollary of the attempt to reconcile the ruling party with Soviet society, and to raise productivity by harnessing economic incentives, much as the style of enlightened absolutism in the past was the corollary of the attempt to foster the economic development of the middle class. Khrushchev could crush his inner-party rivals in the Stalinist manner—but he could no longer control Soviet society with a crushed party; hence he prefers to have independent-minded spokesmen of social "weight"—like Mikoyan, Malenkov, and Zhukov—within the inner councils of the Party.

Now such an attempt to reconcile the régime with Soviet society has been made once before: in 1934, following the end of forced collectivisation and the completion of the first Five Year Plan. "Life is getting happier," the slogan of the brief Kirov era, could have been the motto of the twentieth congress; "back to 1934" sums up its intra-party meaning. Mikoyan's remark that the "cult of personality" had replaced collective leadership for almost twenty years takes us back to this date, the eve of the Moscow trials.

This is the key to the new directive concerning the revision of Party history and the rehabilitation of Stalin's victims. There is no necessary conflict between Khrushchev's renewed condemnation of "Trotskyites, Bukharinites, and bourgeois nationalists," and Mikoyan's demand for a new history of the civil war years. The collective decision evidently has been to confirm the *political* condemnation of the various opposition groups defeated by Stalin, but to dissociate the new régime from the horrors of the purge period. It is no accident that the first prominent victims to be rehabilitated—Kossior, Postyshev, Rudzutak, Chubar—were associates of Stalin in the Politbureau who supported his policy against both "left" and "right" opposition groups, but were subsequently liquidated

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during the great purge because, it would seem, they had opposed the arrest of Rykov and Bukharin on charges of treason. Logically the next step ought to be at least a partial rehabilitation of the Trotskyites and Bukharinites themselves, i.e. their recognition as men who advocated a policy rejected by the Party, but who had been unjustly branded as traitors and counter-revolutionaries. This would be so signal a contribution towards restoring objective standards of truth and justice as to make all but impossible a reversion to the specifically Stalinist methods of intra-party terrorism and falsification of history; it would in fact constitute a moral guarantee of the permanence of "enlightened absolutism."

Whether Khrushchev (who himself helped at the time to purge some of the men now rehabilitated from the leadership of the Ukrainian party) knows it and likes it or not, men's thirst for truth is a real force. Now that the twentieth congress has given the signal for the opening of the Party archives, it will be difficult to bridle the eagerness of Soviet historians to get at the facts about the great treason trials. None of this can bring the victims of Stalin's terror back to life; yet if the Soviet Union should in our times return, for all the differences between her forms of government and ideology and ours, to respect for the common moral principles of civilised humanity, no one would be entitled to belittle so profound a change.

III

ANY dictatorship needs enemies to justify its existence. If it hazards the bold move of renouncing the myth of the internal enemy, and of seeking a reconciliation with its own people, doctrinaire insistence on the irreconcilable conflict with the capitalist environment becomes all the more indispensable. For this reason, the changes in international policy and doctrine announced at the twentieth congress, while important in themselves, are with one exception wholly confined to the realm of strategy and tactics. They need not concern us in this analysis of the fundamental forces at work within the régime, but for a brief warning against misunderstanding their true character.

Two pronouncements made at the congress are likely to cause such misunderstandings. The recognition that world war is no longer inevitable—on the ground that the forces of the Soviet bloc and its sympathisers in the "imperialist camp" may now be strong enough to prevent the imperialists from carrying out their wicked plans—is certainly sincere as far as it goes, but marks no basic change in policy. In practice, the Soviet government always strove to avoid involvement in world war even in Lenin's and Stalin's time, including its most aggressive periods, and the new revision does not touch its fundamental belief that the world is sharply divided into two hostile camps—one "imperialist," the other "Socialist." Nor does the recognition that "peaceful," "parliamentary" roads to socialism are conceivable in certain conditions affect the other part of that basic dogma—that a Communist Party dictatorship ("The rule of the working class under the leadership of its Communist vanguard") is the condition of "socialism" and indeed of any economic and social progress, and that any state not governed by such a régime, including states with democratic Labour governments, remains subject to all the laws of capitalist decline. The revisions, in fact, merely concern the roads to Communist dictatorship—"parliamentary" as in Czechoslovakia or violent as in China—and the relations between the Communist bloc and its enemies, not the need for Communist dictatorship and for a Communist bloc.

The only exception concerns the relations among Communist states—the recognition that independent Communist revolutions, and independent Communist régimes, are possible, and that the Soviet Union must work with them on a fraternal basis and may even learn from them. This thesis is based on a return to Lenin's views as well as on the facts of the Chinese and Yugoslav revolutions; but it marks a truly fundamental break with the Stalinist dogma of "the leading rôle of the Soviet Union" which sought

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to deny that possibility. Like the break with Stalinism in domestic matters, it means both an immediate increase in flexibility and effectiveness—shown in this case in the reconciliation with Tito—and the creation of new problems, e.g. whether the satellite states, who have had no independent Communist revolutions and whose leaders have taken an active part in Stalin's anti-Titoist purge, shall remain Soviet satellites or be exposed to Yugoslav influence. The way may also be opened to a more independent development of the strategy of some other Communist parties, still within the framework of the general doctrine but with less regard to Moscow's "advice," particularly in Asia, but possibly also in Italy; their leaders have certainly been encouraged to try and win power by their own efforts.

IV

WE HAVE interpreted the twentieth congress as an all-round attempt to salvage the Party dictatorship, its present head, and its Leninist doctrine—not by retaining Stalin's methods but by abandoning them. The dictatorship is to be preserved by concessions to its subjects, the one-man rule by the myth of collective leadership, the dogma by flexible adaptation to experience. But if this is the purpose, two critical questions arise at once. Why was it necessary, after three years of gradual reform, suddenly to throw continuity to the winds and to demolish the traditional symbol of authority? And what are the chances, now that this has been done, of consolidating the régime on the new basis?

Both questions lead us back to the basic force behind the change—the accumulated pressure of the new society that has grown up within the hard shell of the party régime. Once again, a comparison with 1934 is instructive: then, Kirov's attempt to liberalise the régime led to the first flowering of "Thermidorian" tendencies, until Kirov's assassination gave Stalin the opportunity and pretext to start the purges and to develop his specific recipe for preventing the Thermidor by the "permanent revolution from above." Now, Stalin's heirs have deliberately returned to Kirov, but the Thermidorian forces are stronger by twenty years of social and economic growth, by the spread of technical and administrative knowledge and of military self-confidence founded on a victorious war. This time they cannot be broken so easily; even last year's defeat of Malenkov proved no more than a temporary setback for them. Hence Khrushchev is trying to canalise them, to win their confidence, to give them pledges —and he finds that their price is rising.

The open repudiation of Stalin, the admission that all the present Party leaders were helpless tools of his crimes, is not yet the Soviet Thermidor—but it is the greatest victory so far of the forces of the Thermidor; and this is true independently of whether Khrushchev's disclosures had been planned collectively before the congress, or whether Mikoyan's first public attack on Stalin came as a surprise and had such strong backing—from Zhukov?—that it forced Khrushchev's hand. For while the second version would be more dramatic, the basic forces at work would be the same in either case, and it is these forces alone which lend importance to the—hypothetical or actual—alignments of the leading Soviet personalities.

Can Khrushchev succeed in canalising these forces? The answer lies with the peoples of the Soviet Union. On his side are the habits of more than a generation of Party government, the concentration of all political experience in the Party machine, and last but not least the remarkable new flexibility and self-confidence which liberation from Stalinist shackles has given to his team. Against him there is above all the moral effect, so difficult to estimate from the outside, of that fantastic totem feast at which the collective of posthumously rebellious brothers devoured the remnants of their tyrannic father in full view of the nation. How far will the critical faculties of the millions who grew up in Stalin's shadow be awakened by this spectacle? What will they think of a Party which now admits that it has fed them lies for twenty years and has shared responsibility

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for the slow extinction of countless innocent victims in the icy wastes of the Far North and East, but asks them to believe that it will be the champion of truth and justice in future?

YET, on another plane, the future of the régime may be decided by a hard and prosaic test—its ability to prove itself in the task of economic construction. The attempt to use the Party as an extra driving force of an economic system which tries to raise productivity with the aid of material incentives involves dangerous internal contradictions; the experiment has only just begun. Its risks may be shown briefly in connection with two basic problems of Soviet economics—the future of collective farming and the decentralisation of planning.

The low level of agricultural productivity has for decades weighed heavily upon the entire Soviet economy, and it still represents the major obstacle to a notable raising of living standards. Since Stalin's death it has become the object of strenuous efforts on the part of the new leaders and particularly of Khrushchev himself. "Campaigns" such as the settlement of virgin lands or the increased cultivation of maize can at best lead to partial improvements, but do not touch the basic cause of the lag in farm output; for this lag is rooted in the structure of the collectives themselves.

The very form of collective farming implies two major hindrances to a steady rise in productivity. In the first place, the individual peasant lacks an adequate incentive for exerting himself on behalf of the collective: long years of experience have taught him that he cannot get enough out of the joint income of the collective, and in consequence he tends to concentrate on his small personal allotment and his private livestock, a tendency reinforced by his individualist tradition. In this respect the kolkhoz displays the drawbacks of a feudal manor whose serfs attempt in every way to limit the services they render to their lord.

But the kolkhoz also suffers from another weakness: it cannot calculate its labour costs. The collective farmer does not earn wages, but instead receives a share of the net income retained by the kolkhoz, the share being calculated in relation to the "labour days" performed by him. In consequence the kolkhoz always tends to waste labour and to "find work" for peasant families even where it yields very little, until and unless they decide to run off. Under this aspect, the kolkhoz shares the characteristic disadvantages of the small peasant farm which keeps going despite its uneconomic methods, because the peasant exploits his own labour and that of his family.

The desire to transcend the present forms of collective farming is therefore not confined to the ideologists of the "transition to Communism." If the kolkhoz peasant could be transformed into an agricultural labourer for whom his private plot of land has only marginal significance, it would be possible both to focus his material interest on work for the collective (wages would of course be paid by piece-rates, under the Soviet norm system), and to rationalise cost calculation. But is it possible to carry out such a transformation without provoking bitter resistance?

Here we have one major test of Khrushchev's policy. During the weeks preceding the twentieth congress the Soviet press were full of suggestions for reforming the kolkhoz statute in that direction. Following the congress a decree was issued empowering the kolkhoz assemblies to scale down the private plots of members who fail to perform enough collective labour. At the same time the kolkhoz managers are advised to make cash advances on their members' share of collective income, thus introducing both an additional incentive to work and a form of wage payment (advances being calculated on the basis of what a labour day is presumed to be worth). This decree evidently represents a considerable step in the direction of transforming the peasants into wage labourers, but it is not at all clear how far it can be carried out without risking a renewed "intensification of the class struggle in the countryside," and consequently a threat to

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the conciliatory policy proclaimed by the leadership. The alternative would be to allow the peasants to leave the kolkhoz, a step which the great majority unquestionably still desire to take. That would certainly secure a sensible rise in output; but quite apart from the fact that it would presuppose a previous abolition of the forced delivery system if it was not to disrupt the normal exchange between town and country, such a "counter-revolution" is presumably beyond the horizon of Stalin's erstwhile colleagues. Thus the raising of agricultural productivity depends on measures which must evoke resistance either from the peasants or from the Party.

A SIMILAR though less drastic difficulty presents itself in the other great issue of Soviet economic policy: the decentralisation of planning. Everyone in the U.S.S.R. knows that the biggest single factor in promoting waste, inefficiency, corruption, and black-marketeering has been the utopian attempt to establish central control over every detail of production in every single plant. In actual fact the economy only functions, and the overall plans are only broadly fulfilled, because the industrial managers evade the system of detailed bureaucratic control and "scrounge" for whatever materials or spares they need on the black market. Anyone who troubles to think in economic terms also realises that productivity could be substantially raised and costs lowered if the central authorities could be brought to renounce this bureaucratic system of planning in detail. In fact, a number of measures have been taken during the past eighteen months to reduce the central planning apparatus and transfer responsibility for entire groups of industries to regional authorities.

But these reforms do not touch the core of the problem: the truth is that for a large number of minor economic decisions the most rational solution is not to plan them at all, but leave them to the discretion of the manager and his response to the market situation. (That discovery was made by the Yugoslav Communists at the beginning of 1952.) In that case, however, one has got to let the market fulfil its function without constant interference by propaganda campaigns. A market economy based on economic incentives can develop quite well within a framework of large-scale planning, but it cannot afford (and does not require) "socialist competition." If plants can rely on a steady flow of materials, if wage scales are rational, and if there are consumer goods to be had, people will anyhow work as well as they can—and what, in that case, becomes of the Party's rôle in the production process?

These examples should suffice to demonstrate the contradictions inherent in Khrushchev's attempt to maintain the Party rule without an internal enemy. It was noteworthy that the congress on the whole evaded such concrete issues. We are far from pretending that, in Communist parlance, these contradictions are "insoluble." But the solution clearly depends upon the further zigzags of the transformation of the régime.

And indeed this is the only prediction which can today be risked: despite the concentration of power in Khrushchev's hands, despite the genuine successes and the apparent consolidation, the régime remains in flux. Social pressures have already driven Khrushchev further away from Stalinism than he intended to go—in fact, beyond the point of no return. The twentieth congress marks a station on the road, an attempt to consolidate the Party's rule internally and to reaffirm its dogma in relation to the outside world. But the dialectic cannot be halted: the dissolution of Stalinism continues.

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George Barker

The Face Behind the Poem

An Essay in Honour of Tennyson

"His opinions too are not original, often not independent even, and they sink into vulgarity: not only Locksley Hall but Maud is an ungentlemanly row and Aylmer's Field is an ungentlemanly row and The Princess is an ungentlemanly row. . . . But for all this he is a glorious poet and all he does is chryselephantine."

—Gerard Manley Hopkins

THERE is an arithmetic of poetry in which totals transcend all enumerations: it is not possible to equate the figure of Tennyson by adding together those elements that go to make up either the poems or the name. Put conversely, if you dismantle the construction of Tennyson you will discover that the sum of the parts does not equal the whole. To me it is as though these poems and this reputation were in fact inhabited by the presence of a superior power, a phenomenon of electricity, seemingly unwilling to subject itself to isolation or analysis. I do not mean to refer to the "Poetry" in the poems or to the "Poet" in the name: I mean to speak of a kind of authority imbuing both, which neither, upon examination, could wholly account for. Tennyson's poems, unlike those of, say, Ben Jonson, transcend their own achievements and their own intentions in such a way as to render a purely semantic criticism of them quite specious. They call for an exercise in metaphysical permutations. For the Tennysonian characteristic is ambivalence. The poem is there in the hand; one examines its colours and lines with much the same delight as if it were a kingfisher; and then discovers that one has a salmon or a cheap piece of Victorian cut glass in one's hand. And I am speaking of more than the "impression" or "effect" of the poem upon the reader; the ideas or intellectual specifications of the poems seem to mutate as one looks at them, like the behaviour of water.

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

It is almost possible to watch such lines manœuvring their emphases like the lacunæ of Lamia. When Tennyson is accused, as he has been, of silliness, of intellectual provinciality, of vulgarity of mind, what is happening, I think, is that his accusers are looking at the poems as though they were simply presenting a case. But Tennyson's poems never simply present a case (or even a portmanteau): for when these poems present a case, it is by no means this presentation that matters most. What matters more is an expression on the face of the figure that makes this presentation: the never quite visible but

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never invisible presence of the poet himself. I think that this remark holds for poets other than Tennyson. The poems of Yeats, for example, and of Eliot even more so, draw part of their plenipotential dignity from the expression on the face of the poet as he presents the poem. Nor is this expression of the poetic face to be deduced directly or even obliquely from the emotion of the poem itself. Like Carroll's cat, it is very hard to place. And sometimes the "effect" (which may be the same thing as the meaning) of the poem occurs catalystically between the statements of the ostensible words and the expression of the invisible face. (This antiphonic effect is clearest, as I see it, in the satirical poem. For we know that behind the machinations of the satire moves inevitably the love that seeks effects.)

So that the first of the metaphysical permutations of the Tennysonian mask is, I think, this plurality: the expression of the observed word and the expression of the invisible visage. To bring what evidence I may for these adumbrations, I suggest that recognisably the face behind the "Idylls of the King" hints at its own falsity whereas the face behind "The Two Voices" acknowledges that it has removed its innermost mask. "The Two Voices" is not only a better poem: it is also a better Tennyson.

This notion has nothing to do with any speculative autobiographical correspondences between the poem and the poet: what I seek to describe is the permanence of that moment when the poet, perceiving the possible poem for the first time, modifies his approach to it in terms that strive to anticipate the poem's nature. I suggest that in the apocryphal street where poets pick up poems, there are laws that govern the behaviour of both. The poet is not permitted to accost one kind of poem as though it were another; nor can he know what kind of poem he meets until he has met it. But he must behave as though he had in fact foreseen its nature, for this prognostication operates, in retrospect, as though it had actually had a hand in the evolution of the poem's nature. And this moment of what one could call categorical recognition is the moment immortalised ever afterwards in the expression on the face of the poet as it presides—as it must preside—over the poem. It is, finally, the act of imaginative domination which precipitates the poem's identity.

Thus the Sonnets of Hopkins are dominated by an expression not so recognisably present in these sonnets themselves as in the mask or face that hangs like a cloud over them. It is a cloud not of anguish and not of personal passion but of a kind of ineffable regret. Not the individual regret of a creature for things done or for things not done; but the ineffable regret of the spirit aware that it can liberate itself only through its actions, which is torment, or through the intellect, which is inconclusive, or through theology, which is not viable. Thus these sonnets have two subjects: the ostensible subject of the poet's despair, and the unspoken or masked subject, the tragic regret that this despair is not only possible, but, unforgivably, poetic. The poem hates the poetry.

Over Tennyson's beautiful and agonised poem "The Two Voices" no such profound regret (that the poem hates the poetry) presides as it does over the Sonnets of Hopkins. Behind the nihilistic tergiversations of "The Two Voices" there echoes a private resentment rather than a tragic regret. Where the Sonnets accuse the divine powers with a transcendental "How could you ever do this to us?" "The Two Voices" accuse those powers with a petulant "Why did you ever do this to me?"

But my purpose is not to try to make up an essay in comparative anatomy between Tennyson and Hopkins: what I seek to do is to demonstrate if possible the tenability of a theory of poetic possession; a conception of the face behind the poem, the hidden visage of its creator, that visage which, like an act of possession (in both senses), can never be dismissed from the poem, any more than the face of its father can be erased from that of the child.

I take it that a total poem is, in itself, the metaphor of an event. Since it is certainly

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not the mere description of an event (though it may be partly this), and since a poem cannot possibly exist without the event that engenders it, then I conclude that it operates or migrates between the inceptive event and the abstracted idea of the event enshrined in the eventual poem. I have to employ obscure terminology because this is the dark backward and abysm of the mind. Briefly: the subject of the poem is an occurrence in the moral or material history of the animal: the poem itself is such an event stolen from temporal affairs and transferred to the altitude of the Ideal. What I want to propose is that in this transference of the event from the world of temporal affairs to the altitude of the Ideal, the poet may (or may not) be aware of the almost supernatural obligations of such a Promethean act. Promethean in that it attempts to return this privilege whence it came.

Is there no bright reversion in the sky?

And upon the poem itself the presence of this awareness of a supernatural prerogative or obligation may leave its distinguishing imprint, yet no more visible and no more verifiable, save in between the lines, than that demigod left his handmark on the first flame. Tennyson makes this—no, not clear, because such a matter could never be that, not clear, but—a perhaps tenable notion, and for the very reason that his poems contain little except the fire and the dross or the best and the worst. Thus this face wears the illuminated expression of a natural man who is not a demigod but who is really playing with fire. And this is the supernatural privilege, for among the Caucasian Rocks of the mind this ontological fire can destroy as well as animate. See William Blake.

WHAT distinguishes a messenger from men who are simply going from one place to another is more than the weight of the message he carries. A glance at the melancholy postman trudging down a damp lane with a neat packet of letters under his arm unmistakably declares that Housman has merely a few letters of condolence to deliver. If the address on these envelopes were not quite so impressive, one has no doubt that he could bring himself to chuck the lot under a hedge and go home to bed. Conversely it would be excusable to assume from his behaviour that every word carried by Tennyson contained State secrets. And this consciousness of a supremely responsible communication (which is not the same thing as a supremely important message) imparts to the poem its air of authority, and presides over the total body of a poet's work like that face or visage of congenital possession which I have tried to describe. Thus this consciousness of a supernatural privilege or obligation so presides and so imparts the seeming authority. And, as I see it, Tennyson acknowledged this privilege and exercised this authority. What principally renders that sinister figure a sympathetic and at the same time an apparently simple equation is his demonstrable conviction that even obscure issues can be spoken of quite clearly.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.'
As from some blissful neighbourhood,
A notice faintly understood,
'I see the end, and know the good.'

But this is not to say that such obscure issues did not exist for him. And by obscure issues I mean those remote but powerful enigmas in human affairs to whose elucidation the workings of the creative intelligence have always been largely directed: the ambiguities about ourselves, the gods and the world that we do not understand, and of whose very existence we have only uncertain evidence.

Verlaine said of him: "When he should have been broken-hearted he had reminiscences." But what *In Memoriam* lucidly and veritably attests is this: that when one is broken-hearted, one does in fact have reminiscences. It may not be honourable, it may not be intelligent, it may not be French: but it is what Tennyson knew more than Verlaine. What is it that we recollect in tranquillity? Verlaine's remark is as irrelevant to *In Memoriam* as Samuel Johnson's strictures

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are to *Lycidas*. For Tennyson is not less prepared to be obvious in the services of the poem than Whitman was prepared to be vulgar or John Milton academic or Wystan Auden a boy scout or Yeats a Voronoff gland. What such poets have made out of their allegorical instances, this is what truly matters. Nor can I recognise on what authority we are to understand that poetry cannot be created out of vulgarity, obviousness, reminiscences, or, indeed, since William Shakespeare showed us, out of anything or nothing at all.

For what I am really trying to write about is not so much Lord Tennyson, whose shade is in no need of my administrations, as about the art of poetry, whose identity has not, even yet, been categorically disclosed. It is the great honour of Tennyson that he was elected to glorify the simple but never simple-minded operations of the common intelligence, whose ardours and labours may be no less memorable than those of a larger range but a smaller vulnerability. This most "poetic" of poets speaks in truth not for those intellectual potentates who can very well speak for themselves, but for the common or sensible man.

As I see it, the speculative intelligence is to the poem what the camouflage is to some species of animal: a function to make one thing look like another. The function of speculative intelligence in a poem is to make that poem look like a rational and comprehensible statement. But the poem is not this, or not merely this, because if it were it would in no way differ from the rational statements of prose. And we have it on the authority of Dr. I. A. Richards that prose makes statements and poems make "pseudo-statements." "Poetry is speech framed for contemplation of the mind by the way of hearing or speech framed to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning." No, the Dionysian beast whose nature is disguised by the camouflages of an intelligence is a hybrid monster uniting the instincts and the imagination of man. And these instincts and this imagination provide the real or sleeping subject of the poem, where, to all appearances, this subject is merely a collection of unverifiable assertions. I believe that a poem does not finally appeal to the seat of rational judgment in mankind; it has other courts of judgment; the poem appeals to the analogical goddesses of memory, to the idols and incarnations of the human passions, to the instinctive responses of sensual conditions, as much as to common sense. And perhaps one of the reasons why Tennyson's poems wear what I have called an expression of ambivalent authority is this: that they utter the ejaculations of wonder which would be wrung from all perfectly normal intelligences if liberated in a world and underworld of such goddesses, such idols, such sensual conditions, and so little common sense.

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Democracy, Liberty, and Mr. Worsthorne

[*The author of the following discussion-article was formerly a member of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department. His book, "The Nature of Power," was published in this country last year by Rupert Hart-Davis.*]

I DON'T know how it may be in Britain, but most of our government officials in the United States make no profession of philosophy. Their decisions of policy respond more to the practical considerations that press upon them than to considerations of theory. On the other hand, the philosophers and students of politics in our universities generally live at some distance from the world of governmental action and decision.

This separation of action from philosophy was not the basis on which our civilisation got started, and it is not the basis on which it is likely to keep going. Where action is not the child of philosophy as well as expediency (a good philosopher should not deny the rôle of this second parent), it lacks the discipline and the inspiration of great purpose. At best, then, it makes a dreary record of death-in-life, like the thousand years of the Byzantine empire. At worst it leads to a less lingering end.

The civilisation-makers are the men who marry philosophy and practical affairs. An example was provided in the January issue of ENCOUNTER by Mr. Peregrine Worsthorne, in his article, "Democracy *v.* Liberty?". Taking the Geneva decision to hold elections in Indo-China this summer, he examined its philosophical underpinnings to determine whether they were in good order. He concluded that they were not.

In Mr. Worsthorne's view, the Geneva arrangement between the Western and the Communist powers (the United States abstaining) is that the people of Indo-China are to make their choice at the polls between a democratic system of government and a Communist tyranny.* In other words, they are being given the right to elect tyranny. Worse than that, 51 per cent are being given the right, in addition to voting themselves into servitude, to vote into servitude the other 49 per cent and the generations yet unborn as well. The question arises whether they should properly have this option.

Most of us, in Britain and America alike, were brought up to a rather simple notion of democracy which equated it, on the one hand, with liberty, on the other with majority rule. Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other. Therefore the implication of this elementary-school view is that liberty and majority rule go together. I the people are sovereign and are allowed to express their sovereignty and are allowed to express their majorities they will take care of their own liberties.

In point of fact, political philosophers since the Enlightenment have recognised that a choice might have to be made, on occasion, between popular freedom and unqualified popular rule. They have recognised that circumstances might arise in which the people, achieving self-government, might use it to deprive themselves of it, that they might use their freedom to destroy their freedom. In such a case, does not the philosopher have to make a choice between democracy (identified with majority rule) and liberty?

In such a case, however, there would be no way for the philosopher to choose democracy. A vote for democracy would be a vote for a sovereign who would abdicate. At best, therefore, the choice would actually be between liberty and tyranny, and there might not even be that choice.

THE only answer that the defenders of majority rule can make to this contingent dilemma is that there is no better alternative to placing one's reliance in the people, since the people are the least likely of all possible sovereigns to allow the destruction of their liberties. They generally concede, however, that the people's preservation of these liberties depends on the degree of moral and intellectual enlightenment in those who cast their votes. Having this in mind, the founders of liberal government in America and Britain alike were disposed, on the one hand, to promote public education as the necessary precondition of democratic self-government, and on the other to qualify democracy more or less severely by restricting the franchise to the educated (and propertied) classes.

* The government of southern Vietnam, not having been a party to this arrangement, has felt free not to give it effect. This makes Mr. Worsthorne's issue academic without, however, invalidating it in the least.

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The history of liberal political thought from an early stage has involved a conflict between that Jacobin democracy which triumphed in the French Revolution and that conservative liberalism, best represented by Burke and John Adams, which triumphed in our English and American Revolutions. While the conflict appeared in our own ranks—for example, in the difference between Jefferson and Hamilton—here it had, for the most part, the relative moderation of a disagreement over precisely where to find the golden mean, such a circumscribed disagreement as represents the genius of Anglo-Saxon politics. Jefferson said the people should be trusted and the will of the majority given effect, even when it came to the interpretation or revision of our Constitution. But he was not saying that the people should be trusted even though they were to do wrong; he was saying that they should be trusted to do right. And he did not himself trust them to do right except in a predominantly rural society where a degree of enlightenment prevailed.

Is there any sovereign—whether a man, a class, or a nation—who has the right to do wrong? A liberal is bound to answer, I think, that the exercise of sovereignty must always be limited by an obligation to do right. The right to do wrong is the mark of arbitrary, irresponsible, and tyrannical government, whether it is exercised by an oriental potentate, a popular majority, or even a unanimous people.

The question remains, however, whether the people are not best qualified to distinguish right from wrong—whether they do not even make right and wrong by their decisions, the voice of the people being the voice of God.

No one would deny that there are some matters the people cannot decide. Kipling's story of "The Village That Voted the Earth Was Flat" comes to mind. I do not recall how great a majority favoured the proposition, but I do recall that its decision had no effect on the shape of the earth. Likewise, the decision of a majority does not, to my mind, make wrong right. Abraham Lincoln, who was as ardent an exponent of majority rule as Jefferson, is on my side. "Judge Douglas," he said, in the course of a famous debate, "declares that if any community wants slavery they have a right to have it. He can say that logically, if he says that there is no wrong in slavery; but if you admit that there is wrong in it, he cannot logically say that anybody has a right to do wrong." Lincoln knew that, given the choice, a popular majority will sometimes choose the wrong rather than the right. Slavery in the South was a well-nigh incontrovertible example. He concluded that the majority could not properly be allowed such a choice.

If the decision of the majority does not identify right, and the decision of the minority wrong, then how are they identified? Here we return to philosophy, the tap-root of liberty, of democracy, of civilisation itself. Lincoln had no doubt that slavery was wrong, whoever might vote for it, because it violated the principles of that philosophy in which, as a child of our civilisation, he had been brought up.

We ought not to think of this philosophy (what Mr. Walter Lippmann has called "the public philosophy") as a rigid doctrine or a creed to be memorised by school-children. It is, rather, a conception of man and the universe that apprehends the existence of something to be prized in both—treasure beneath dross, good behind evil, a grail to be sought, a possibility to be realised. Religion has glimpses of this something, art and music show it in reflected gleams. You will find it in the Sermon on the Mount, in Shakespeare, and in the American Declaration of Independence. We call it "virtue" or we call it "the good life," we call it "beauty" or "truth," we call it "God" or "divinity," we call it "the soul" or we call it "human dignity." The life of the individual or the life of society is properly a quest of it, and so it gives our common life direction and purpose. It disciplines social organisation and limits the exercise of any human sovereignty whatever.

The philosophy that supports civilisation, then, quite transcends particular dogmas or philosophic systems, embracing a diversity of beliefs. Confucians, Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus own it. Socrates, Abelard, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Lao-tse, and Matthew Arnold can meet in its illumination. Under this philosophy in its most generalised sense, individual men, whether they have freedom or not, have a place of dignity. The youngest son in a Confucian society may be governed in every action by the obligation of obedience, but he is self-respecting to the extent that he is playing an indispensable rôle in an ideal society. He is realising virtue.

Our Western civilisation has tended to find its fulfilment in the freedom and responsibility of the individual as such. Having been brought up in this tradition, like most of us, I can hardly conceive of the good life without it. But even among us the forms have been various. The founders of the United States were moved by a concept of human rights as belonging to the divine order of nature, so that they could not be alienated by any human agency, popular or otherwise. On the other hand, Utilitarians like Bentham and John Stuart Mill had no use for this concept of natural rights, finding another justification for the liberal organisation of society

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in the greatest happiness of the greatest number. But in their definition of "happiness" they came out with much the same conception of human purpose as the exponents of natural rights. The two schools united in the pursuit of a "happiness" that was more than hedonism.

It is by the test of this philosophy, as it appeals to us, that slavery seems wrong and that the unlimited sovereignty of a single tyrant or an oligarchy seems wrong. It is by the test of this philosophy that any unlimited human sovereignty at all, including the unlimited sovereignty of a popular majority, should also seem wrong to us. Mr. Worsthorne calls the doctrine of unlimited majority rule a heresy. I agree. It is a heresy against the philosophy of civilisation. It is the Jacobin heresy, which lends itself so well to demagogy, and which appears to have gained ground among us in the past century and a half. According to it the people are always right, whether Robespierre, Stalin, or an actual majority speaks in their name. To the guillotine, then, with all dissenters and nonconformists!

I suppose it is a natural tendency of liberal society to evolve in the direction of progressively wider public participation in government. Our own society has long been committed to this progress. But if it is not to lead to ultimate disaster, as in ancient Athens, then public education must keep pace. This means more than just the spread of literacy, which by itself might simply make more efficient servants of a dictatorship. It means something different from teaching children how to brush their teeth, or giving them courses in labour-relations. It means the dissemination of that literature, art, and learning which embodies the philosophy of civilisation. This is the essential heritage which, in some form or other, must be passed on to the successive generations of those who are to govern our society. Two centuries ago, in Britain and America, that meant a wealthy minority. Today it means practically everyone. We ought, I think, rather go from three meals a day to two than see a new generation grow up, like the last of the Romans, without this heritage; for to cut this tap-root is to kill civilisation. The transmission of this heritage may be less urgent than the development of intercontinental ballistic missiles, but it is no less vital.

So far I have gone along with Mr. Worsthorne. At this point, however, I shall confess a doubt. Mr. Worsthorne says that at Geneva the British Government agreed that the Indo-Chinese might, through electoral procedures, make a choice between Communist rule, which is tyrannical, and something called democratic rule, which is not. "Because," he says, "it has served the national interest to pretend that peoples enjoy an absolute right to choose a democratic form of government, we find ourselves committed to the wholly different thesis that they enjoy an absolute right to choose tyranny, if they so desire."

The actual situation is not so clear to me. For one thing, Mr. Worsthorne must have been troubled, as I am, by the fact that the choice before the people, in this case, would actually be between two tyrannies. They could hardly elect a liberal system because they are not prepared for it by tradition or education. It is unlikely that they could sustain it if they got it. Certainly the anti-Communist government of southern Vietnam represents freedom in little more than name.

My other difficulty is that the nominal situation is the opposite of this actual situation. The Vietnamese, nominally, would be allowed free election only of a choice among forms of liberal democracy. The Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference on Indo-China puts it this way: "The conference declares that, so far as Vietnam is concerned, the settlement of political problems . . . shall permit the Vietnamese people to enjoy the fundamental freedoms, guaranteed by democratic institutions established as a result of free general elections by secret ballot. . . ." Here is a clear denial, in effect, of any right to choose tyranny. They may choose only democratic institutions that guarantee the fundamental freedoms. How can Mr. Worsthorne or I quarrel with that?

It is an odd position in which we find ourselves when we cannot quarrel with the formal arrangement, which is liberal, yet cannot, without equivocation, accept either of the possibilities that may result from it. Theory and reality appear to have parted company at this point.

If you boil down the paradox it amounts to this: we claim that all peoples must govern themselves on the basis of realising certain fundamental freedoms or inalienable human rights, whatever you choose to call them; but we know that most peoples are, as yet, quite incapable of so governing themselves. We insist on what we recognise to be impossible. Now I suggest that this is no position for any philosopher to get himself into.

How do we get out of it? I look at the provisions made for self-determination at the meeting which drafted the Atlantic Charter, at Yalta, at Potsdam, and in the United Nations Charter, noting with surprised if subdued gratification that our statesmen appear, in fact, to have avoided entrapping themselves in the same position. The language is vague in each case, referring to the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will

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live, while juxtaposing to such references, at least within the distance of a sentence or two, some statement that includes the words "democratic" or "self-government." It was supremely wise, I think, not to be any more precise.

Is this cynicism on my part? Not in the least. It seems to me that Mr. Worsthorne and I have been too narrow in our definition of right and wrong. What I have called the philosophy of civilisation, by which we make these discriminations, is catholic in nature. It has room for many ways to the one goal, and its acceptance implies, consequently, a broad tolerance in those who are governed by it. The Bill of Rights represents our ideal in America and Britain, but we do not insist on its immediate adoption and realisation by other cultures. If, for example, the ancient rule of the Middle Kingdom were restored in China tomorrow we would surely not declare it invalid under the Charter of the United Nations because it made no provision for popular representation in government. We are neither so parochial nor so unrealistic as that.

"Self-determination," then, means many ways to one goal. "Self-government" means a form of government native to the governed and in keeping with their cultural background. It does not necessarily mean universal suffrage for, say, the Javanese but, rather, their own forms and ceremonies, their own leaders, their own procedures, and their own values—nothing alien and imposed from outside.

If we take this broad view, then the wisdom and utility of a slight vagueness in our definitions of democracy, self-government, and freedom becomes apparent. All in all, our officials, disciplined by practical considerations, may have been better philosophers than either Mr. Worsthorne or I, at first blush, were prepared to admit. By sticking to the principle of self-determination, broadly conceived, we cannot guarantee any particular kind of government for the Vietnamese, but we support the best possibility there is that eventually they will have such government as is proper to them. Considering the extreme weakness from which the West had to play its hand at Geneva, I conclude that we did rather better than might have been expected. Here, then, is one vote for the British position.

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Mr. Crossman Replies

"Complete socialisation, as practised in the Soviet Union, has degenerated into a totalitarian state, in which the loss of civil liberties is not counterbalanced by the eradication of inequalities."

In reviewing my pamphlet, *Socialism and the New Despotism*, in your last number, Mr. Irving Kristol chose the above sentence as the text for an extremely witty sermon on Socialist heterodoxy. He suggested—rather flatteringly as I thought—that I might be motivated by nothing more than "a disinterested curiosity as to where a line of thought will lead." But then he smacked me down by finding the sentence he quoted so inane that he had to accuse me of "carelessly saying things he cannot conceivably expect us to believe that he believes"; and he suggested that my carelessness had been due to "an almost pathetic attempt to achieve a common language" with my Socialist readers.

Of course, Mr. Kristol is on to something when he points out the difficulty of combining practical Labour politics with the kind of thinking aloud that I was trying to do in this Fabian pamphlet. Mr. Kristol believes "either that intellectuals should keep out of politics, or that they should be extremely circumspect and prudent about their involvement in it." I think he is too pessimistic, at least about British Labour politics. Our Labour Movement is far more tolerant of intellectual heterodoxy—and far less tolerant, by the way, of group schism—than any of its Continental counterparts. No British intellectual needs to indulge in doctrinaire claptrap in order to avoid excommunication.

But does this poor sentence of mine deserve the scathing condemnation Mr. Kristol gave it? Since he has called my attention to it, I have read it and re-read it and it still seems to me to be a not very original or exciting statement of obvious fact. Surely one of the main problems of Socialism is the conflict which is constantly cropping up between the two Socialist aims, the enlargement of freedom and the achievement of equality. A State solely devoted to the enlargement of personal freedom will permit fantastic inequalities between wealth and poverty. On the other hand, if, as Britain did in the war, the State moves towards real equality of spending power, it is compelled to impose elaborate rationing schemes, which are a denial of liberty. One of the main practical problems which faces a Socialist Government is now to strike a balance between these two aims. When we look at the Soviet Union, we are surely right to assume that the Bolsheviks, in their first, revolutionary phase, really believed in the classless society and regarded the dictatorship of the proletariat as a temporary expedient. They were quite deliberately sacrificing civil liberty and personal freedom in order to achieve equality. I have always been opposed to Communism not because Communists were prepared, after a revolution, to impose a brief period of dictatorship, but because they taught that revolution and dictatorship were the *only* way to the classless society and made a virtue of their revolutionary ruthlessness. It was, I am sure, because their doctrine justified dictatorship *on principle* that they were so rapidly corrupted by power.

All this seemed to me so obvious that it did not need argument in my pamphlet, and so I compressed it into a single sentence. It may be that, by ripping this sentence out of its context and examining it so severely, Mr. Kristol has hit on a real and substantial difference between the assumptions of American liberalism (post-war ADA style) and those of British Socialism. If Mr. Kristol holds that personal liberty is the only value we should strive to realise in a democracy, it is logical enough that he should refuse to see any substantial difference between the dictatorship of Nazi Germany and the dictatorship of the Soviet Union and Communist China. The fact that the Nazis destroyed personal liberty in order to erect racial inequality into a political system, whereas the Communists destroyed personal freedom in a perverse effort to reach a noble ideal, seems to Mr. Kristol an irrelevant consideration. Indeed, he described it as "the sort of thought that one sometimes comes across in the left-wing circles he is here addressing himself to—that freedom is the less violated if the rape takes place under the sign of equality." Neither I nor any Socialist would maintain that freedom was less raped in Russia than in Germany, but every Socialist must maintain that a loss of freedom can be counterbalanced by a gain in equality.

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HAVING castigated me in the first part of his review for not caring enough about personal freedom, Mr. Kristol devotes the second half to a complaint that I am too much concerned about the dangers to it in 20th century Britain.

> *"I find myself out of sympathy,* he writes, *with the kind of bravado now so fashionable among many people—right, centre, and left, from "Punch" through the "Spectator" to the "New Statesman"—that encourages them to break a paper lance for English Liberty. In a world where the loss of liberty is only too real, too common, too painful, it strikes me as tasteless to mobilise all of one's moral indignation against various malpractices in the British Civil Service, or British trade unions, or British industry."*

This criticism astounds me. Just because civil liberties do not exist in the Communist part of the world, is it really to be regarded as "tasteless" for British people to make sure that McCarthyism doesn't happen here, and to take thought about the best methods of curbing the power of the oligarchs and oligopolists who dominate the modern industrial State? Of course Mr. Kristol is right to question whether England today is less free than it was twenty or thirty years ago. It is vastly more free, thanks to the Welfare State, which has reduced the economic insecurity that provided the main obstacle to any genuine sense of personal freedom in the British working class. A Socialist, as I pointed out in my pamphlet, must be prepared, despite all the dangers, to accept very great increases in the power of the State and its control over our lives; and he will on occasion be ready to limit the liberties of individuals or of a class if this is essential to the collective good. But, in my view, there is a serious danger that an exclusive concern for material welfare, increased productivity, etc. will bring with it a decline in personal freedom. If all we ask for is efficiency and higher living standards, then we shall find ourselves ruled by a hierarchy of business executives, trade union leaders, and party bosses.

Mr. Kristol asserts that, in putting this Socialist case for personal freedom, I have slanted my argument "against the right wing of the Labour Party." Implicitly, he is alleging that the Right wing of the Labour Party cares less about personal freedom than the Left, and that the Radical tradition is only sustained by Socialist militants. I myself have sometimes been tempted to make this harsh judgment against some of my colleagues, but I never expected Mr. Kristol to put it forward.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

House of Commons
S.W.1

A Post-Christian Epoch?

MR. PHILIP SHERRARD in "A Post-Christian Epoch?" (February 1956) criticises a widely-held view of the meanings of Christianity and "Christian civilisation" and proposes an alternative version of the Christian religion. To those acquainted with the writings of René Guénon, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Aldous Huxley, and others, this version will not be unfamiliar. Its main tenets are that there is a universal and perennial religious wisdom, a kind of Gnosis, which is the highest common factor of all the great religions. It is the fruit of initiation and of an experience often called intuitional, to distinguish it from reason. This wisdom has been compromised by the Christian Church in, for instance, its exoteric activities and undue interest in secular civilisation. The task before the Christian Church, therefore, is to recognise "the existence of a genuine esotericism," and so "revitalise what has become largely, if not entirely, an exclusively exoteric institution."

Any attempt to bring together the best in Eastern and Western religious thought is welcome. I am afraid, however, that Mr. Sherrard has been hasty and has made too much of superficial similarities. His arguments, also, and evidence are erratic. He quotes, for instance, St. Augustine as saying that Christianity "has never ceased to exist from the origin of the human race until the time when Christ Himself came and men began to call Christian the true religion which had already existed beforehand." Mr. Sherrard does not give the reference and context of this quotation. They are sorely needed. Can it be that he is confusing the Gnostic sophia with St. Augustine's City of God, which, indeed, is said to have existed from "the beginning of the human race"? I hope not, because St. Augustine's City consists of the society "of those who are saved in Christ, by participation in whom every rational soul is made blessed." Like other Christian writers, St. Augustine held that pre-Christian wisdom was a shadow and pointer to the truth of the Word made Flesh. The Christian writers of the first centuries had often to answer the question: "How can a new and perfect religion come so late?" Its newness is the point at issue, which they one and all proclaimed from St. Paul onwards. "What is old is passed away; behold all is now made new." "Christ has turned the setting into the rising sun," for, as St. Augustine asked: "Christ brought newness. How can there be twilight where Christ is?" I can think of nothing which would have more outraged the Gospel writers, St. Paul and St. Peter, Clement and Ignatius, and the Eastern and Western Fathers, than to

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be told that their teaching was as old as the hills, just a restatement of an ancient and gentile wisdom. Mr. Sherrard should count how often St. Paul uses the word "new." I do not ask him to labour through the writings of the Fathers. I wish, however, he had picked more representative ones. What he has done is to summon Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Dionysius the Areopagite, and Nicholas of Cusa to his side. Great as Origen is, he is not the best spokesman on the issues at stake. Dionysius was a disciple of Proclus, who won special favour because he was mistakenly thought to be the Athenian of the same name, whom St. Paul converted. Nicholas of Cusa brings us to the 15th century. He had a singular view, summed up in two words, *Docta Ignorantia*, a view which does not easily fit in with what Mr. Sherrard has to say on reason and intuition.

I do not think Mr. Sherrard is accurate in what he says of intuition and reason. Intuition is not necessarily "the function of initiation," nor is it "a divine quality in man." He is too anxious to bring in initiation and the language of esoteric religion. He cites Origen and Clement of Alexandria as teachers of an esoteric religion and as making distinctions between the initiated and the masses, those capable of intuition and those who had to rely solely on faith. There is, however, no real evidence for believing such a distinction existed in early Christianity; and what Mr. Sherrard takes to be evidence, namely, the *disciplina arcani*, is irrelevant. Where this *disciplina* was operative it served to protect the sacred mysteries from misunderstanding and abuse. The "mysteries," moreover, were not something esoteric, the privilege of the wise ones; they were the common objects of worship and doctrine, such as the Eucharist—forms of worship and doctrine, in fact, which Mr. Sherrard considers to be later corruptions. To these mysteries, moreover, the simple have as direct an entrance as the intelligent. That this truth is misunderstood by Mr. Sherrard is due to his misconception of Christian faith. Faith is not a cheap ticket of admission to the gallery: it is the common privilege of priest and people, saint and sinner: even what Mr. Sherrard calls intuition falls within faith. This misconception of faith and of the difference between the Christian faith and the esoteric religions goes back a long way. In the 2nd century St. Irenæus had to protest against the Gnostics in language less polite than I am using. He calls all this talk about initiation and secret wisdom so much raving. The bishops appointed by the Apostles and their successors "neither taught nor knew anything resembling these men's ravings. For if the Apostles had known hidden mysteries which they used to teach the perfect, apart from and without the knowledge of the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were committing the churches themselves."

THERE are many other statements in "A Post-Christian Epoch?" which call for at least a brief criticism. Emphasis on moral teaching does not necessarily imply an intellectual decline. There is plenty of moral instruction in the Pauline epistles. Mr. Sherrard should go back to St. Augustine and read his letter to Januarius. Esoteric doctrines, of which I gather the Second Coming is supposed to be one, have not been concealed or denied. Interest in the Second Coming, for instance, is very much alive today. The difference between the Eastern and Western Church in art and devotion does not denote a different understanding of Christianity. Suffering is at the heart of Christianity. It is indicated in the Beatitudes, in the mystery of the Cross, and is foremost in the Pauline teaching. Mr. Sherrard must read again the letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch in the first century. The variations in devotion are a matter of emphasis, one aspect of doctrine appealing more than others owing to the conditions of the times. Byzantine art is all composed round a historical event and is a world away from "Hindu or Taoist or even Orphic traditions."

Mr. Sherrard shows his own affiliations perhaps most clearly in his interpretation of the decline of Christianity in the Middle Ages. The Church, we are told, owed its vitality then to the legends of the Holy Grail and Christian hermetism. It turned, however, against the esoteric and genuine religious spirit among the Albigensians and the Cathars. One may be sorry for the violence the Church showed against these sects, but the reason was that it detected in these movements the old Gnostic counterfeit of Christianity, the "ravings" which had deceived so many in past centuries; and it is this same Gnosticism in its latest form which, so it seems, Mr. Sherrard has embraced. This Gnosticism springs from a desire of union and identification with the One, the Ground of Being, the only Real, the "Light of the 'Unmanifest.'" It is always esoteric; it is for the initiated, for those who can pass beyond the veils and shed what is material, human, and personal. There may be a universal and perennial "Wisdom" of this kind, and much that is contained in it may have likenesses with Christian teaching. What more natural, seeing that Christianity claims to reject nothing human? But Christianity is a historical religion: the object of its worship is One who is both God and man, and therefore the historical, all that belongs to human society, falls within its range. That this concern with history and society is not a later development, as Mr.

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Sherrard supposes, is proved by the fact that some contemporary Christian writers argue from the texts of the New Testament that the Kingdom of God is to be a temporal event, as down to earth (though from heaven, the "new city coming down") as the Marxist classless society. I do not agree with this view, but the fact that it can be argued shows that Christianity is not what Mr. Sherrard maintains.

Incarnational Christianity is very different from the Gnostic idea of it. Some of the problems and tensions which Mr. Sherrard mentions are real, but neither the terms in which he states them nor the solutions he offers belong to historic Christianity. In short, Gnosticism fears and dislikes the human condition; Christianity accepts it, knowing the cost.

M. C. D'Arcy, S.J.

London, W.1

Congratulations to Mr. Philip Sherrard on a most profound and understanding article. Yet can we have much hope of an initiative in Western Europe by the Orthodox Church—which, I agree, is our sole ecclesiastical hope? Initiation is the transmission not of secrets, as some suppose (e.g. Steven Runciman in *The Medieval Manichee*), but of powers. This is quite plain from Alexandra David-Neel, herself an initiate, in her book *Initiations & Initiates of Tibet*. Two things follow. First, not all who have received Apostolic Succession are qualified to transmit it. Second, we cannot be sure that it has never been transmitted outside the clergy of a given church. The Cathars unquestionably had it; hence the devotion they inspired. It is quite possible therefore that some esoteric schools of the present day may be more qualified to bestow it than the average priest. But (which is rather inconvenient) one cannot judge of any such organisation except by joining it.

Rupert Gleadow

London, S.W.3

There are many views in Mr. Sherrard's interesting article, "A Post-Christian Epoch?" (Encounter, February 1956), which practising Christians of both East and West will question. I will, however, limit myself to a few points concerning the Greek Orthodox Church. It would be unfair to say that the Eastern Church derives its spiritual character from certain "esoteric" groups like "the Hesychast tradition of Mount Athos and other such centres deriving from it." The Hesychast movement, even in its hey-day, was small and uninfluential within the framework of the Greek Orthodox Church. The great body of that Church always looked to Constantinople and the Oecumenical Patriarchate for guidance and inspiration. And Constantinople, as we all know, was one of the great centres of dogmatic controversy and formulation. Medieval and Modern Greek Christianity has never felt "dogma" and "genuine initiation" as incompatible. Indeed, they have been always felt as complementary to each other. Of all the Christian Churches perhaps the Greek Orthodox Church is the most "exoteric" (to use the word in Mr. Sherrard's sense). And this, among other reasons, is due to the long years of Turkish domination (1453–1828) of Greek lands, during which Orthodox Christian and Greek national conscience became synonymous. If it is felt that religious feeling is waning in the Western world today, the reasons should be sought outside the Church and its teaching. For both Eastern and Western Churches are striving in the same manner to help and guide modern society, which is increasingly susceptible to materialistic considerations. Materialist views tend to spread in historical periods, in which science appears to have suddenly advanced, and the conclusions of scientific research are popularised in a misleading and unleavened manner.

C. A. Trypanis

Oxford

Still the Dismal Science

Does it matter, you ask (in the March issue), if the Soviet economy is growing faster than the American? A very proper question, and the answer is not in the least obvious; but surely your attempt to answer it is superficial.

"If at the end of this century every Russian can boast three refrigerators while every Englishman has only two, will this convert the people of England to Communism?" Why do you think this question is rhetorical? Of course it would convert *some* of us, and if our Communist Party was already as large as the Italian it would be a very serious matter indeed. Substitute Italy for England and your question points to a very real danger indeed.

"And if by that time every American has a helicopter while the Russian has to make do with a mere automobile, will that convert the Russians to a philosophy of free enterprise?" The answer is, of course it will, in very large numbers. Russians, you seem to forget, are brought up to worship material success; and one of the main reasons for their defection hitherto has been precisely the discovery that workers live much better in the West. There are ample data on defectors to prove this point.

You then turn to the appeal of Communism in uncommitted Asia. It is quite untrue that Communist propaganda, here or in any other

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part of the free world, "explicitly demands even greater sacrifices, all for the presumptive benefit of future generations and to the certain disadvantage of the living." On the contrary, this is an internal propaganda line altogether at variance with the line for export.

I agree that the "choice of totalitarian Communism, with its militant orthodoxy and inquisitorial repression, would never occur to a person [*sc.* an uncommitted Asian] who was merely shopping around for solutions to *economic* problems"; if by that you mean shopping around for ways to raise his living standards. But Asian leaders and intellectuals—and it is only these that count—understand something much wider by "economic problems." After all they are not personally starving. Many of them want that transformation of society that goes with industrialisation, urbanisation, and the liquidation of peasants, not necessarily the consumption part of it. They view economics as an end in itself, or a means to national glory, not a means to personal better living; theirs is a religious economics. So "shopping around" among alternative solutions they find Communist economics vastly attractive. Would that they were smaller-minded?

To the view that Asians are attracted by Communist economic growth and methods—which surely the most cursory acquaintance with Asians would confirm—you oppose the view that Asians in the fifties are like European *literati* in the thirties: Communism satisfies "a quasi-religious longing for certainty in truth and rational order in society." Well, this is indeed present too; but it is most certainly not the only factor, as it was with our own intellectuals in the thirties, who lived in rich modern countries and did not have to bother their heads with economic development. Can it be, Sir, that extrapolation from personal experience has deflected your gaze from what is new in fellow-travelling?

Then you have unaccountably omitted armaments and foreign investment. Which camp is to make the first inter-continental missile, and which is to build the High Dam at Asswan? Are these spiritual matters too? Yet defeat in either one of them alone could wipe out civilisation as we know it.

If I seem to insist unduly on these banausic details it is not through unconcern with "the spiritual and moral equality of [our] way of life." That is what economics exists to subserve. But Communists and many Asians don't think so. How are you going to get at them?

P. J. D. Wiles

New College, Oxford

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

Edmund Wilson's *Scrolls from the Dead Sea* has been published in this country by W. H. Allen and is now in its fourth printing. . . . **D. J. Enright's** latest book of poems, *Bread rather than Blossoms,* has just been published by Secker & Warburg. . . . **Isaiah Berlin's** lectures on *A Marvellous Decade* will be published as a book next autumn by Collins. . . . **Mark Abrams** is Director of Research at a London advertising agency, and is at present working on a book on "Social Change in Modern Britain". . . . **Martha Gellhorn,** well-known as a writer and foreign correspondent, is now living in London. . . . **Sandy Wilson's** musical comedy, *The Boy Friend,* is now in its third year. . . . **D. Mack Smith** is a Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge. . . . **Richard Lowenthal** is a political commentator on *The Observer.* . . . **George Barker's** collected poems will be coming out next year. . . . **Hilary Corke** is a Lecturer in English at Edinburgh University. . . . **Christopher Sykes's** most recent novel, *Dates and Parties,* was published by Collins. . . . **Stuart Hampshire** is a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford. . . . **G. L. Arnold's** *The Pattern of World Conflict* was published recently by Allen & Unwin.

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NOTES FROM A DIARY

A Day to Remember: March 17th, 1956

March 17th, opening *The Times* and reading about Khrushchev's speech to the secret session of the Communist Party Congress gave me the sense of horrified satisfaction one gets with the end of *King Lear* when Edmund exclaims: "The wheel has come full circle, I am here." What the exiles have been saying for the past twenty-five years has now been said by the men in power. Action has produced a catharsis in which all parties are brought together and the truth is out.

What happens now to this truth? Is it a tragic purge that leads to a new beginning or is it an episode in picaresque comedy?

The Russian experts (who may be respected for having told us so long ago what K. now tells us) do not judge it a conclusion, a full stop, the result of a past situation and the creation of an entirely new and different one. They interpret it as a move in the game of Power Politics: and discuss only whether it has to do with an internal struggle between the leaders themselves or is a gesture to the outside world to prove that we should love K. and B. even more than we did S.

The experts may be right in thinking that it is a manipulated change and not the conclusion of a drama made by forces beyond personalities. This greatly qualifies the nature of the truth now being revealed. It means that instead of implying recantation, the great change—which would be above all a different attitude towards historic truth—it is simply one argument in the twisted pattern of Soviet dialectic. The facts about Stalin—already known outside Russia—are now being digested into the Soviet machinery. The Party has caught up with the anti-Communists. Yet the Soviet deputy who is reported to have shouted: "Why didn't you throw an ink-well at Stalin?" was speaking with the voice of another kind of truth—a truth which is suspicious of truths spoken out of the mouths of those who are themselves tainted and who, apparently, made no gesture to remove their taint. Perhaps this anonymous voice will speak again. Meanwhile one can expect that those who have allowed themselves to be deceived for thirty years by Stalin will the more gladly and trustfully now permit themselves to be deceived by those who have opened their eyes to the previous deception.

Tragedy or Picaresque History

Nothing is more possible than for a tragedy not to be treated as tragic but as a mere episode in a rather larger comedy. *Macbeth* need not be a tragedy. It could easily be picaresque history. All that need happen is for Macbeth's followers to recognise after the fall of the tyrant that he had been a bit tough—even *they* had been frightened—and then for the Macbeth Party to carry on. The moral would be, not of evil purged, right ways vindicated by right men, but that it was wiser and nicer to survive Macbeth. Macbeth's true opponents would turn out not to be heroes but at the best poor fools who, by insisting on throwing ink-pots, hurled themselves over the abyss. Macbeth's followers, who danced the Highland Fling when ordered to do so by the late Tyrant, would be justified as Those who Laugh Last. The only precious thing lost would be the truth that might be redeemed from such a history. In tragedy, everything stops while a truth is extracted from a corpse and handed round for inspection.

Writers today are preoccupied with the question whether to write tragedy or picaresque drama. It is always fascinating when—with a sudden gleam—history illuminates the deep preoccupations of the artist, which are then seen, for a moment, to be one with history.

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The Lessons of Tragic Truth

A tragedy is a machine specially constructed to destroy a hero who regards himself as indestructible. Of course, the poet who makes a tragic machine does not do so in order that we may learn how to live in comedies in future. All the same he draws on the most destructive situations in real life—and we should therefore be able to learn from tragedy what it is that destroys. This should have enabled us to foretell the fate of Hitler and Stalin without the aid of experts. But there has been a suspicion during this century that tragedy is out-dated; and that with the help of the police and bureaucrats it is possible to invent a *perpetuum mobile* of what is called today "The Cult of Personality" without it destroying the person sitting in it. George Orwell in *1984* prophesied a kind of indestructible Science Fiction machine of social tyranny which does not end in the fall of the tyrants. But the fates of Hitler and Stalin show the Tragic Machine still operates. It will be interesting now to see what happens when it is run by a committee without a Cult of Personality.

The main characteristic of the Tragedy of the Tyrant is that truth is driven underground. It suddenly becomes not the admitted reality which is the firm nature on which everything rests, but a vague rumour. One ought therefore to measure the quantity of tyranny in a country not by whether the state is run by one man or two men or three men, but by the attitude of the ruler or rulers to truth. If truth is treated as equal with lies which can be manipulated for the convenience of the government, then one should not be deceived about the nature of that society.

The Painter Brother of Yeats

In Dublin I called on Jack Yeats, the painter, who winters at a nursing home. His room was bare except for bed, chairs, a table, some luggage piled up. Nothing depicted on the walls except two horses on a calendar. Jack Yeats has a face one finds in his own paintings and W. B.'s poems, the kind of face one sees at country fairs, domed and long with eyes bright as chips of light. He talked about his father, John B. Yeats, who was also a painter. He said "the governor" spoiled his paintings through having too long a working day and going on painting when he was tired. His father insisted that his children paint. His brother W. B. was also an art student and did some very wild things at art school but could have done fine work had he gone on. Later in life he had some chalks and did some interesting drawings. Jack Yeats said his father's idea was true: if in drawing you got beyond the stage of drawing just symbolically (a disk for the head, sticks for arms and legs) then even though you never took up pencil or brush, you went on mentally drawing things all your life, and in that way learning always more about appearance and anatomy.

Dreams under Gas

Having had teeth extracted under gas five or six times, I am puzzled and fascinated by the dream I always have under gas, which I know to be as formal as some special figure of speech. I remember it right up to the moment of regaining consciousness. Part of the dream is my determination, while I am dreaming, to remember it. The elements that go into the dream are as follows: I am conscious of the mask being placed over my face, and I start thinking "Now I am going under." Then this thought changes to its opposite—that I am not under, that I wish the operation had taken place, and I know it has not done so. This idea repeats over and over again, until finally it is interrupted by a click (which is the tooth being extracted) and I recover consciousness. Recently when I had this experience the dream was particularly vivid, and I was very conscious of dreaming it. I thought I would recall every detail and then (as it also seemed extremely funny) I would make an article for *Punch* out of my always having the same dream under gas. At the moment of regaining consciousness, I remembered to tell the dentist that I would be able to pay him his fee out of my *Punch* article. I then tried to explain to him the dream and I said (really very aptly) "It is like a trill." At the same time I could no longer understand what "It" was, although even now it still leaves me with the feeling of something classically clear and extremely vivid—which nevertheless I cannot recapture. The dream under gas brought up into consciousness is like bringing up to the ocean surface one of those enormous, strange-shaped fish which (we are told) dwell on the deepest ocean floor and then, as soon as they reach the surface, explode.

Stephen Spender

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BOOKS

"... And People Opening Veins in Baths"

WHAT marks the true greatness of a writer is, first, the peremptory and sovereign way he imposes himself on successive generations of readers; and second, the mystery that attends his ultimate "meaning," his inexhaustibility before the commentator. One is almost tempted to say that his mystery is his meaning: his words impress us as fragments torn from a greater silence, where the whole truth is to be found, though not by us. There are not many such writers altogether. Most of them are poets and dramatists. Some are novelists and philosophers. Very few are historians. Thucydides perhaps belongs among them; Tacitus certainly.

Tacitus is the historian of the extreme situation, without hope and without despair, almost without humanity. Yet, paradoxically, just as the *deus absconditus* of the theologians could be known through his absence, so it is this seeming want of humanity that quickens our own sense of its existence. Thus:

> *The general rage against* [the fallen favourite] *Sejanus was subsiding, calmed by the executions already carried out, yet retribution was now decreed against his remaining children. Therefore, they were taken to prison, the boy understanding what lay ahead, the girl suspecting it so little that many times she asked what wrong she had done, what place she was being taken to, saying that she would not do it again, and that she should be punished as children are. Contemporary writers report that, the execution of a virgin being unheard of, the hangman violated her beside the noose. Then both were strangled and their bodies thrown on the Gemonian steps.*

The girl's name we do not know, nor anything else about her. In the blood-spattered pages of the *Annals*, her fate can hardly be called exceptional. Tacitus gives no sign of pity; and whatever it is that the reader feels, pity is not quite the word for it. The effect of this passage may best be compared to an experience most of us probably do not have more than once in our lives; when we dream of our own death, not with any sentimental pathos, but with a cold, clinical detachment, simply seeing it happen, an event among an infinity of events, in an infinity of time and space—and then we awake, feeling in a way we never did before what it means to be a human being in a universe where human beings need not exist.

In his *Agricola*, Tacitus refers to those who were spared by Domitian's terror, and says that they "had outlived both others and themselves." He was one of those who survived himself. Despising Imperial Rome, he served it well, and was in turn well rewarded with high posts and privileges. The whole import of his chronicle is that this is a time when nothing can be done: the zero point of the human condition. He condemned those who opposed the régime, for he saw no alternative to it and they only worsened matters; and those who supported it, for it was base. He censured Seneca for betraying his Stoic-republican principles by toadying to Nero; he censured Thrasea Pætus for being loyal to these same principles and offering resistance to Nero; and he praised both for dying well. Monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy were all unstable forms of government, leading to tyranny. The only good one was a "mixed constitution" as described by Polybius and Cicero—but it was beyond the capacity of men to establish such a state. It was permissible to think about "primeval man, untouched as yet by evil impulse," and his *Germania* is just such a fantasy. But his own age was fatally marked, the people corrupt and beyond redeeming, the barbarians rebellious and menacing. The sole honourable behaviour was to avoid contention and die bravely. Nor was there anything to hope for from the gods, "who care nothing for the happiness of men, only for their punishment." All tokens of divine intervention were fraudulent:

> *Many prodigies occurred. A woman gave birth to a snake. Another woman was killed*

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in her husband's arms by a thunderbolt. The sun suddenly went dark. . . . But these portents meant nothing. So little were they due to the gods that Nero continued his reign and his crimes for years to come.

THE full Tacitean quality does not come through in Professor Michael Grant's new "plain English" translation.* On the other hand, its simplicity and readability will presumably attract many readers who might otherwise fight shy of so baroque an historian; and the introduction and appendices are models of erudite popularisation. Like Shakespeare, Tacitus will endure almost any loving translation, and Professor Grant's is indisputably that. For, again like Shakespeare, he is complaisant to all human intentions.

And how complaisant! There is a still unwritten chapter in the history of Western political thought that would deal with the varying uses made of Tacitus (and of Machiavelli too, with whom he has such an odd affinity). The classical revival of the Renaissance propelled him into a new and highly ambiguous career—no longer a Roman chronicler, but a political guide to "real" politics as opposed to the "imaginary" politics of the medieval mind. Somehow, by a transvaluation of values we do not even now fully understand, the medieval ideas of a good society, of the moral obligations of ruler and ruled, of a transcendent standard by which political actions were to be measured—all these were suddenly felt to be pretentiously hollow, while the unalloyed hellishness of the *Annals* (especially of Books I–VI, dealing with Tiberius) came to be regarded as a revelation of the "realities" of political life.

It was Guicciardini, one of the founders of *Realpolitik* and friend of Machiavelli, who first enunciated this new approach to Tacitus: "Cornelius Tacitus teaches very well those who live under a tyranny how to conduct themselves prudently; as he also teaches tyrants how to found a tyranny." Here was a school for dictators that was also a school for tyrannicides: one chose one's banner and enlisted. Gentle Montaigne saw in Tacitus "a nursery of ethical and political instruction for the aid and ornament of those who have something to do with managing the affairs of the world." And Nicolas Perrot, translating the *Annals* for Richelieu, advised him that "it is in his [Tacitus] learned writings that one is taught the art of ruling." The new secular monarchies studied the cunning, the hypocrisy, the ruthlessness of Tiberius; courtiers quoted Tacitus and Machiavelli (often

* *Tacitus on Imperial Rome*. Translated by MICHAEL GRANT. The Penguin Classics. 5s.

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confusing the two); this was the essence of royal wisdom. At the same time, however, there were those who found in Tacitus precisely the strength to withstand the new secular tyrannies: Justus Lipsius, the founder of international law, and editor of the first modern edition of Tacitus' works; and Chénier, the French republican dramatist and poet, who declaimed: "*Son nom prononcé fait pâlir les tyrans.*"

The French Revolution even saw the emergence of what one modern historian has called "Red Tacitism"—Tacitus as a *sans-culotte*; but by that time the idea of politics as being entirely profane and "realistic" was so taken for granted that interest was declining in Tacitus as a political mentor. Instead of being admired as a political sage, he began to be condemned as a nasty-minded and inaccurate historian. Politics was now safely profane; the need was to make it respectable. Tyrants were to be neither imitated nor opposed: the very idea of tyranny was to be abolished, along with the superstitions of those dark centuries that had never been able to elevate themselves sufficiently to see History and Humanity, but merely men and their deeds. It was Voltaire who sounded the cry, by charging Tacitus with "degrading humanity"; and Napoleon, naturally preferring the glory of tyranny to its gore, registered an indignant protest that in the *Annals* one found "nothing save accusations and men accused, persecutions and the persecuted, and people opening veins in baths." The historians of the 19th century followed suit and quickly engaged in a co-ordinated effort to convict Tacitus of historical error, in order to rehabilitate such Tacitean monsters as Tiberius, Nero, and Domitian. It was one of the greatest missionary enterprises in the history of scholarship, and one of the most successful. It is now as difficult to find a historian to speak ill of these men as it once was to find anyone to speak well of them (for even the new absolute monarchs never dared go so far). There is unanimity behind Mommsen's judgment that Tiberius was "the most capable emperor Rome ever had." And his latest biographer, Dr. Gregorio Marañon,* a physician-turned-historian, is as eager to "explain" Tiberius as any social worker is to "explain" a juvenile delinquent: he had suffered a childhood trauma when his mother divorced his father to marry Augustus, though sexually feeble he was married to a nymphomaniac, etc. etc. It all makes a plausible and, in a morbid way, fascinating case-book. It has the further advantage that we see the ulcerous and suppurating face of the man, rather than the smooth marble bust of the emperor that the professional historians seem to prefer. But in the end it comes to the same conclusion, that the portrait of Tiberius that Tacitus gives is little less than a slander.

WHAT is striking about this revision of Tacitus is that it is necessarily based on Tacitus himself, since he is our only significant source for the history of the period: and it is Tacitus himself, too, who makes the work so relatively easy. Though he asserted that he wrote *sine ira et studio*, he certainly did not mean by this anything akin to the academic ideal of "objectivity." Evil he might be helpless before, but he could not fail to recognise it, and he assumed that those who did evil were themselves wicked. It is rare that he made a statement of fact about Tiberius without also making a more or less gross insinuation. Thus, we read: "About the same time a serious illness of Julia Augustus made it necessary for the Emperor [Tiberius] to hasten his return to the capital, the harmony between mother and son being still genuine, or their hatred concealed." Usually he was more subtle than this and there are many occasions when we have to read him very closely indeed to perceive that he has in fact denied what one thought he had said. But it is not at all difficult for a diligent scholar, by snipping off the "facts" from the "value judgments," to compose a new mosaic which is very different from the Tacitean original. To be sure, there remain the corpses, the murdered and mutilated and self-destroyed. These the scholar may dispose of, first, by counting them to demonstrate that their sum was less than astronomical, then by allowing for exaggeration, and finally by turning his attention to the Pax Romana, the efficient imperial administration, and all those other glorious things that make up History.

Now Tacitus had no idea that Tiberius and Nero were making a contribution to History. His problem was: how did they, and all of Rome with them, come to such depravity? His general answer was: under tyrannies men are unmanned: "The ties of our common humanity had been dissolved by the force of terror; and before each advance of cruelty, compassion receded." As for the tyrant, he is simply the most wicked of men—else why should he have become a tyrant in the first place? In this he was but repeating a commonplace of classical political philosophy, which took it for granted that men aspired to tyranny out of an evil impulse. That is why he felt no compunction in ascribing the worst motives to the tyrant's most innocent-looking actions.

We have lost the habit of judging tyrants so harshly, for we are more attentive to their

* *Tiberius: A Study in Resentment.* By GREGORIO MARAÑON. Hollis and Carter. 25s.

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Historical rôles, their "objective" tasks, than to their human meanings. It is the supreme virtue of Tacitus that, as we read him, the mists of History fade away, and we see only "persecutions and the persecuted, and people opening veins in baths."

Irving Kristol

A FEW POT-SHOTS AT THE GAGGLE

ONE of the recurring embarrassments of the reviewer's life is the book, thoroughly praised all round, which he feels to be bad before opening it and finds to be bad on reading it; and yet, when all is done, he is somewhat at a loss to explain either the mechanism by which his suspicions were aroused, or that by which they were confirmed. Mr. Richard Church's *The Dangerous Years** is, as far as I am concerned, a book of this nature.

Perhaps it is easiest to consider Mr. Church's virtues first. The personality that "comes through" *The Dangerous Years* is honest, sincere and decent, on the side of the angels, with the sheep against the goats; if his writing is sheepish rather than angelic, that is perhaps disappointing rather than surprising. I have unfortunately not read Mr. Church's recent prize-winning autobiography, *Over the Bridge*: that it should have been (as its reviewers claim) in any sense *well-written*, I find, on the evidence of the present book, incredible; but I have no doubt that it found its own excellence as a faithful image of the reactions of a sensitive and individual person to the world he lives in.

But the novel demands quite other virtues. Honesty, decency, and sincerity, for instance, are by no means incompatible with opinions that are commonplace, ill-founded, or plainly false—opinions which invalidate the novel but may well give autobiography (which is after all primarily self-portraiture) its especial force. *The Dangerous Years* seems to me replete with such prejudices, over-simplifications, and *idées reçues*, particularly those of a euphemistic nature and which betray themselves, so far as the novel is concerned, in the form of clichés and conventionalities of every conceivable sort. These extend to plot, to characters, to style, and to whatever is left over. The heroine of *The Dangerous Years*, Mary Winterbourne, is a sort of super-Mrs. Dale, a "still attractive" widow of fifty, exuding charm and "perfect taste" and horrible graciousness in every direction. She meets a "still attractive" ex-Colonel, "a bit of a black sheep" but weak rather than wicked, and they "learn to love" each other. The sub-plot is concerned with Mary's daughter, a Cambridge don married to another who has so far failed to consummate their marriage on the grounds that "sex and all that" is likely to impair his abilities as a mountain-climber. These two are reconciled by their assuming joint temporary guardianship of an infant musical prodigy—"That night, he came through from his room, and for the succeeding nights they slept together, man and wife," apparently in the hopes of jointly producing a similar little prodigy, though for my own part I should say that if anything could keep one celibate it would be the prospect of that. It will be seen from this necessarily too-brief resumé that *The Dangerous Years* will appeal principally to the middle-aged woman, who is invited to identify herself with gracious, still attractive, Mary Winterbourne, so successful in "the blossoming of her autumn love," so very much one up on her donnish, ungracious, unsatisfied child.

This, I suppose, is part of the mechanism of suspicion: of course it *may* be by chance that a novel will appeal principally to the chief novel-reading sex and age-group, but the reviewer will be on his guard notwithstanding. The first *confirmation* of his suspicions will be the discovery that the book is written almost wholly in clichés or "phrases"—by which I mean turns of speech fully as ubiquitous as the cliché proper, but so colourless that only the assiduous novel-reader becomes conscious of them: things like "Later, when they were dressing . . ." (used after a love-scene which the novelist has seen fit not to describe), or "the poetry of medieval stonework," or "outlined her still slender figure"—indeed the use of "figure" for "body," or of "poetry" for any art but its own, or of "perfect" in almost any connection whatsoever are, in Mitfordian phrase, P-indicators. As for the clichés proper, they are of the most scarifying type: "arrival of a family," "happy event," for child-birth; "interesting condition" for pregnancy; beauty that "must once have made men mad." Some of these elegancies are Mr. Church's own, others are from the mouths of his characters; the really distressing thing is that it is only the inverted comma that separates one from the other.

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* *The Dangerous Years*. By RICHARD CHURCH. Heinemann. 15s.

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Tremendously undistinguished style does not of course in itself finally damn a novel; but unfortunately Mr. Church's characters not only utter clichés, they are clichés—the comic American, the "civilised" Parisian, the saintly doctor, Mrs. Dale herself, that terrible prodigy. And that is pretty conclusive. The things that happen to them, too, are clichés; especially the groaningly contrived ending which, by tumbling the climbing son-in-law off one of his mountains, confronts Mary Winterbourne with an entirely bogus "choice" between lover and widowed daughter—an insult to the characters had they ever (as they have not) been brought to life. (The best thing that can be said about it, is that it shows the Alpinist was *quite right* about the effects of "sex and all that" on his climbing; but this is a moral that Mr. Church fails to draw, somehow.)

There is only one other aspect of this book that I have space to touch on here: it is a sort of woolly middle-aged daydream, and, like most daydreams, extremely sensual. This may appear a surprising observation; but I believe it to hold true of most writers of Mr. Church's type. It is of course (I hasten to add) a *redeeming* feature, so far as it goes: but, though strong, the sensuality is of an immature, untutored, idealistic, and frequently embarrassing type. It is alternately *re*pressed in euphemism and *ex*pressed in outbursts of mad suburban abandon that bring a blush to the most literature-hardened cheek:

> *Tom had opened the venetian blind, saying that he wanted to see her beauty through all the sweet processes of love. She had replied that he was most un-English, and that she did not know whether she approved. They had laughed together, and he had had his way, in this and in what followed.*

All this may, I am afraid, seem unnecessarily close and pugnacious analysis of an eminently inoffensive, if undistinguished, book: but I think it is just as well for once to see exactly *what* is meant when the great gaggle of reviewers put their beaks together with one accord to cry "sensitivity," "grace," "insight," "charm," "lighted by truth," "beautifully written."

THE same cries will probably be uttered, though by a much smaller gathering, over Mrs. Noël Adeney's *No Coward Soul*.* They will be as justified in this case as they were not in the last (which seems to me a sufficiently sad commentary on the present state of reviewing—what should be its most valuable terms have been reduced by irresponsible misuse to the status of meaningless goose-noises). Suspicions will again be aroused by the blurb: "Mrs. Adeney's first novel is about friendship and courage. The narrator, Sydney, a happily married woman, becomes involved in the life of a young poet, Merton. Desperately injured in a railway accident, Merton is dying by inches...." But unjustifiably. *No Coward Soul* would appear on the surface to have all the makings of a big bad bogus book; but it *really* has charm, intelligence, and style, and so it is nothing of the sort. Again the gaggle are for ever telling us "In any other hands but Mr. Ganglion's this theme would be sordid and painful, but ——"; and when we read the book we find it *is*, precisely, sordid and painful. *No Coward Soul really* is not sordid and painful; it is extraordinarily assured and original, and I have no hesitation whatever in recommending it.

*The Bubblemakers** is a first novel by Mr. George J. W. Goodman, and another thoroughly good one. It too is, in a sense, about friendship and courage, or the lack of it. The principal characters are Judge Garnier, a courtly, eccentric, rather Emersonian, Southern gentleman, and his grandson Charley, a somewhat nonconforming alumnus of Harvard. Each is a little lonely, each depends on the other more than he realises. The judge attempts to educate his grandson into an understanding of oratory, family tradition, and fine brandy. Charley, largely unimpressed, in his turn tries to interest the judge in his utterly impracticable scheme for driving a jeep (which he has not got) through central Asia. The judge is unimpressed. Yet Mr. Goodman shows most skilfully that beneath the mutual unintelligibility a strongly marked family identity lies; and when the inevitable explosion occurs and the judge, whose powers of tolerance the years have finally a little sclerosed, kicks Charley out of the house, the tragic irony is moving and painful.

No Coward Soul is extremely English, in a now perhaps rather untypical way—set in a world of small country houses and minor arts assiduously cultivated. *The Bubblemakers* is intensely and peculiarly American, though again in a way unrepresented on the screen or in the average American-issue novel. Nothing indeed could be more superficially unlike than the "*milieu, matière et métier*" of these two first-novelists. Yet their differences fade to nothing against the high degree of originality, intelligence, and (another gaggle-cry!) promise that they possess in common: it is in more than one sense that they speak a common language.

* *No Coward Soul*. By NOËL ADENEY. Hogarth. 13s. 6d.

* *The Bubblemakers*. By GEORGE J. W. GOODMAN. Weidenfeld. 12s. 6d.

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I WANT finally to say a few words about John Malcolm Brinnin's *Dylan Thomas in America.** Mr. Brinnin was Thomas's closest friend in the States, and also his lecture agent and general organiser; his book is simply a straightforward and patently truthful account of his relations with Thomas, and of Thomas's relations with America. There is no doubt at all that this book is going to raise a tremendous storm of anger and protest, of passionate support and counter-protest. This is for two main reasons. Firstly, the book necessarily consists principally of an endless roster of drinking-parties: what has always been known to Thomas's *readers*, and sedulously concealed from his *fans*—the fact that he died from acute and protracted alcoholism—is here for the first time stated in print unambiguously. Those who prefer their own emasculated fancies to the world's bitter facts will be hurt, outraged, cheated; others will say (in good faith but, I believe, mistakenly) that facts must not be blinked but equally need not be made public. Secondly, there will be a tremendous amount of taking sides. This is that sort of a book: the protagonists are likely to become as familiar and as fought over as, say, Lawrence, Frieda, Murry, Brett. Every reader will want to rush in and show how, if *he* had been there, the final terror and tragedy (using those words advisedly) of St. Vincent's Hospital could have been avoided.

I am only human enough to have my own "But surely's" and "If only's": but this is not the place to air them. I shall confine myself to two comments. Firstly, *this book is true.* It carries every internal and external mark of utter honesty. And this is an extraordinarily rare thing: the "truth" of literature or biography, and the truth of everyday life and conversation, are usually different things altogether; but *Dylan Thomas in America* is true in just this factual, "police-court" if you like, manner—it tells us exactly what parties Thomas went to, who with, what he drank there, what (if anything) he ate there, what he said there, and who he slept with afterwards. Whatever attacks Mr. Brinnin lays himself open to, lack of courage, documentation, or objectivity is not one of them. Secondly, the subject of the book is of the very highest importance: *the facts are worth knowing.* Thomas was one of the most gifted men of our times, and anyone who does not wish to understand, as far as is humanly possible, just how, just why he went to his destruction, is averting his eyes from one of the most meaningful tragedies of the age he lives in. For, whatever else in this ominous jungle must re-

* *Dylan Thomas in America.* By JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN. Dent. 18s.

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main obscure and tangled, one thing at least stands tolerably clear: that Thomas's death was in the full moral, if not the legal, sense a suicide. He had chosen to destroy himself, and drink was the selected weapon—sometimes he understood this, sometimes he fought against it, sometimes both, sometimes neither. Now, as always after a self-inflicted death, the friends and lovers gather round for self-accusation and mutual recrimination: what gives the death of Dylan Thomas its universal significance, is that here we are all friends and lovers, whether we "met" him or not, we all failed him. The last fifty pages of this book make as terrible reading as I have come across; if we take them as mere temperance-tract, instead of occasion for self-examination, Dylan Thomas will indeed have died in vain.

Hilary Corke

FROM DIPLOMACY TO PUBLIC RELATIONS

IN AMERICA there is a large and growing literature of scholars' reflections on current affairs, reflections of a kind which lie half-way between contemporary history and advocacy of policies for the future. Many of these studies of recent diplomacy have been encouraged by some distinguished foundation, and they usually aspire to be at once academically solid and practically wise. They are generally less critical, more consciously respectable and responsible, than the equivalent work of the best journalists. Mr. Beloff's lectures,* given at the Johns Hopkins University, and now published, belong to this governmental-academic type, and, within these limits, they are interesting; they are grave, statesmanlike, cautious, and well-documented; nothing rash is said, and nothing too sharply critical, and they will give no offence in America. The tone is that of a White Paper or of the report of a Royal Commission. Can a democracy follow a consistent and reasonable foreign policy? What is the appropriate machinery of diplomacy? The very moderation and Conservatism of Mr. Beloff's lectures may provoke one to think again about the assumptions which lie behind this quasi-official thinking; there may be a place for amateur speculation alongside his professional decorum.

What do we want from foreign policy? What in this sphere counts as success? Certainly a policy has been successful if over a number of years the country in question appears so strong, in virtue of its alliances and dependencies, that it is unlikely to be attacked or threatened by any rival, and if at the same time there is little danger of it being dragged into war in defence of its allies, or of its essential economic interests being sacrificed. The satisfaction of these three conditions clearly depends on correct calculations of power being made from year to year with continuing vigilance. Mr. Beloff of course emphasises the calculation of power as the heart of the matter; it is in the tradition of governmental good sense to stress the realities of power and to deplore popular moral enthusiasms. But what is power for these purposes? How is it properly assessed? Surely the assessment has to be made differently in every age, as the means of production change and as political institutions change with them; ruin comes when the calculation of power is being made in some inherited measurement which no longer applies to elements in the actual world. Looking at only one element in the calculation, namely, the means of warfare, it may seem that in 1956 real power is concentrated, as never before, in the industrially most advanced countries, and very largely in two centres only, Washington and Moscow. But there are other technological changes, namely, changes in the means of communication, which have a contrary tendency. Anything of ordinary human interest that is said or done anywhere, a riot, a scandal, or a new face on the public stage, is known within a day to large sections of the population in many parts of the world. The infections of fear, hatred, and sympathy pass immediately across continents and may create new political alignments and solidarities within a week. What is called nationalism, in its new, extended forms outside Europe, is largely a reflection of this fact of instant communication, of resentment and solidarity between races and religions being transmitted more rapidly over a larger area than has ever been possible before. Since the first student protests after 1815, and the excitement across frontiers in 1848, we have moved into a period when students, or their equivalents, may be expected to be bubbling and protesting about their liberties in any part of the world at any time, in moods of enthusiasm which reinforce each other across any distance. In America itself, which shows the pattern of the future, one sometimes has the impression of

* *Foreign Policy and the Democratic Process.* By MAX BELOFF. Oxford University Press. 15s.

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living in a volatile city-state, where every change of mood passes immediately across the country and becomes a political force, and where a public personality is as familiar as a figure seen every day in the market-place. Through television and the press, the American people are kept in permanent assembly, listening to their leaders and cheering or deriding their policies. Only the totalitarian states, with absolute control of communications, could still use only the traditional diplomacy and might hope to succeed by the old professional finesse alone. But in fact they have always realised that military and industrial strength are not the only, or even the principal, elements of power outside their own borders; a mood of mass enthusiasm may win or lose a war for them before it is actually fought. Therefore, in Cyprus or Alabama, one needs to calculate not only the local effects of a policy of repression upon those directly affected, but the world-wide effect upon all those who will feel some solidarity with the apparent victims. There really are now these amorphous political forces, an Arab world, a solidarity of Africans and of Asians, held together in these larger units by the speed of communication. With bombs and missiles facing each other in a recognised stalemate, alliances can only be gained by economic aid and by appeals to common moral sentiments. Everyone outside totalitarian countries will inevitably learn how much a particular English or American government is ready to sacrifice, of the liberties of Cypriots or of the safety of Israelis, to protect an abundant supply of oil. It is a difficult calculation, one among many of the same kind, none of which can be performed decently out of sight of the multitude, as in the time of the great Lord Salisbury. However such a calculation is made, the principle will have to be explained, and its moral basis argued, simultaneously at home and abroad. There is now little chance of saying one thing in one place and another thing elsewhere without being caught in the act. Therefore the problem of foreign policy is increasingly that of bringing public opinion at home to accept calculations which can be heard without resentment by allies, or potential allies, in Asia, Africa, or the Middle East. There are signs that this necessity is beginning to worry even Soviet rulers. Since the threat of war is now less easily used to make or preserve an alliance, a grim competition in amiability is beginning, a "long haul" of good intentions for export. The personality and moral attitudes of a prime minister or foreign secretary may weaken or strengthen a country in its alliances by the sympathies or antipathies they provoke; like a film star, he soon becomes a familiar and representative face. It therefore

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seems a mistake, on prudential grounds alone, to advocate so-called realism in foreign policy and to turn away from the moral and sentimental aspects of a decision. It would be most evidently a mistake for England, which derives its security and continuing influence, not from its fire-power, but from a network of sentimental loyalties.

Mr. Beloff is not writing as a crude realist in foreign policy. My complaint is only that, because he leaves the notion of power unanalysed, his discussion of the democratic pressures upon diplomacy is rather artificial. Diplomacy and public relations are now so inextricably entangled that it seems hopeless to wonder if things would be better if only they could be separated again. The change does not seem to me a ground for pessimism, at least for English Socialists and Radicals, who can afford to be heard abroad saying what they are in the habit of saying at home. The mere necessities of power, of winning public opinion in the uncommitted countries, are driving governments to profess the more gentle and liberal manners. The Soviets denounce Stalin, as Englishmen and Americans repudiate imperialism and the colour-bar. There is surely no ground for pessimism, as long as power-stations and professions of equality are the necessary weapons of diplomacy.

Stuart Hampshire

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESS

EVERYONE is a libertarian in theory, (even Hitler committed his crimes in the name of German freedom), but everyone too, (unless he has never encountered papers with big circulations), has within him the makings of a press-censor. These makings form a sizeable part of most people's day-dreaming. Let me own to the stringent press-law which has been promulgated from my own personal castle in the air. It is directed against the most heinous of vices, and one hardly touched on in any legal code, namely hypocrisy. By the general provisions of my law heavy punishments, varying in severity according to salary and circulation, can be meted out to newspaper pulpiteers if they ever pretend that their purveying of scandal and smut is in any way connected with the need to cause the truth to prevail. (There is no penalty for open smut-purveyance.) Under the articles of my law relating to national security, terms of imprisonment may be passed on editors of newspapers which affirm heartfelt loyalty to the throne on one page and on another employ photographs and news-snippets which bring the royal family into peril by a deadly process of vulgarisation. Sentimentalism, if tinged with hypocrisy, is another offence according to my law, and fines may be imposed for the publication of maudlin obituary notices on deceased journalists, editors, and newspaper proprietors. My law is, I believe, unique in its treatment of literature, and penalties erring on the side of cruelty can be inflicted on literary critics who pontificate on books which they have not read, especially if they attempt wit. Last and most terrible provision: to say that the country is in a state of indignant uproar when an editor or proprietor is unable to get some tasty and selling item of news, renders the said editor or proprietor liable to a capital charge. I have now confessed my day-dream. Since I have never tried to get it on the statute-book, since it is so hard to love one's press, and since, I believe, many people indulge fantasies of this kind, I do not feel in the least guilty in the matter, though I am ready to admit that the habit is extremely dangerous.

Any doubt about the danger can be set at rest by consulting the fourth survey by the International Press Institute on *Government Pressures on the Press*.* The study is confined to the post-war period and to places where press freedom is respected in theory and practice. Thus, not only are the totalitarian countries excluded from the survey, but also countries such as Korea, Viet Nam, and Formosa where life has been too abnormal in recent years for any normal practice of free speech. Also excluded (not unnaturally) are those countries where there is no press to be pressured, though the governments concerned, as in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Ethiopia, may not be totalitarian in the accepted meaning. One omission may be regretted. There is no report on the press in "non-self-governing" countries, even where the metropolitan country recognises the freedom of the press as an essential political principle. Countries in this category surely provide test-cases of the sincerity of Western belief in the principle, and a chapter on them might have thrown searching light on the whole question. The omission is of small moment, however, when the value of this publication as a reference book is considered.

* International Press Institute Survey. *Government Pressures on the Press*. I.P.I. Zürich.

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THE main theme which emerges from the survey is the unpredictability of the simplest human affairs, such as when well-meaning politicians try to legislate for "a decent press worthy of a decent country." It is probably true to say that no legislator has ever succeeded in achieving this apparently attainable and desirable aim. In 1881, for example, the French Government passed what was considered to be a model press-law, so much so that it has been closely imitated in many places elsewhere. It has turned out to be a disaster, and seventy-five years of it in operation have left many French journalists with the conviction that in newspaper affairs French liberty is precarious. Indefensible statutes relating to defamation, inaccuracy, national security, and preventive arrest have been established with the best intentions on the hallowed foundations of the original legislation. There seems to be some imponderable oddity in human nature (the old-fashioned might call it original sin) whereby all effort to reform the press is headed off into stultifying it, and prejudice finds itself armed with welcome and unexpected powers. A very illuminating example was reported to the International Press Institute from Australia. In 1954 the States of New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland decided that the time had come to adopt laws against press publication of obscene matter, a reasonable proposition and one that should not, supposedly, have been beyond the wit of lawyers to translate into acceptable legal terms. Unfortunately, the problem of defining obscene publication closely and comprehensively without at the same time offending reasonable rights of free speech remained as intractable in the hands of the Australian authorities as it had done with many jurists before them, so they sought a solution in laws which did not go beyond general terms. There was the snag, and the size of the snag may be measured by the fact that the vagueness of the new laws have made it possible for a member of the New South Wales Government to threaten an Opposition paper with an obscenity prosecution unless it stopped attacking the Labour Party! You try to save young minds from corrupt influence, and all you do is to turn a party manager into a full-fledged tyrant.

The Press of the democratic world seems to be harried in the main by two kinds of law-givers, those with secret or avowed totalitarian leanings, and those, such as the aforementioned Australians, who are genuinely concerned to redeem liberty from licence, but are not content with Utopian day-dreaming, as they should be. Japan and the Union of South Africa are examples of the first kind, while most countries practising democracy are in greater or less degree examples of the second kind. Between the two is an interesting indeterminate class of nations with an active and sincere wish for a free society, or at least a parliamentary one, but who are inhibited by their situation, their traditions, or their experiences from allowing free expression of opinion. Turkey is a remarkable instance of this. No country is more truly devoted to the old liberal idea. The climate of opinion is of the 19th century and would receive the approval both of Lord Acton and of his great patron who first called the Turks of the Sultanate "unspeakable." It may be said that, without some unforeseen and exterior calamity, the abolition of parliamentarianism in the Anatolia of today is quite outside probability, yet few democratic countries have a worse record in regard to the rights of free publication. There have been at least twenty prosecutions of journalists in recent years for actions which have no suggestion of an offence against law to an English or American mind. Impartiality has not been pretended. When the editor of *Yeni Sabah* appeared before the Supreme Court in Ankara in 1954, two of his judges declared in his favour, whereat they were replaced by pliant nominees of the Government. Artful pressure is exerted by unfair and remunerative allocations of official advertising, while "guidance" from the Ministries can bear a sinister resemblance to coercion. Yet the paradox of Turkey has logical origins. The rule of Ataturk was authentically parliamentarian for all its authentically dictatorial character, but it was never two-party in the British sense. The Opposition is a recent development, and the risks attaching to the full operation of the two-party system are being experienced and faced for the first time in a territory which is next door to a hostile Russia.

LESS rational than the Turkish mystery is the conduct of democratic Eire. Here also is a country with a deep-seated pride in her parliamentary institutions but without the least respect for the liberties of the fourth estate. Clerical influence explains something, yet the works of eminent Catholic writers have been banned by the Republican Government as vigorously as the works of heretics. As for the censorship of the press, this is so severe that it has seemed proper to ban the decorous *Sunday Times* of London along with the horror comics. We might like to know more about this grotesque event but the survey is tantalisingly brief about Irish policy. Perhaps there is none beyond whimsical prudishness. The moral of the whole story is very plain: happy the country which has no press-laws. Great Britain and the United States have none. Sweden alone has a press-law which, instead of limiting, encourages and increases the right of newspapers

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to say what they choose. As a result, libelled and defamed persons have little redress against newspaper tyranny. Away with all press-laws!

Although the right to a free press has only been gained by persistent struggles, by martyrdoms, and by invincible belief in an ideal, a melancholy spectacle of today is the indifference often shown by people from whom this hard-won right is removed. Morris Broughton, the editor of the *Cape Argus*, reported to the International Press Institute in 1954 that the tyrannical oppression of South African papers by the Union Government was viewed with less indignation in the Union than by people outside. The German tragedy might never have come about if it had not been for the apathy with which Germans reacted to the destruction of the essential liberty of the press by the Nazis, and indifference of this kind is made all the easier by the complacent ignorance of history which goes with modern contempt of the past. Skilful operators with the right propaganda can re-chain the press today whenever they want. Last year in London a group of Communists suspended the national press of England for more than a week. Nobody cared very much, or rather not a thousandth of those cared who would have cared if the Communists had suspended racing or football. The blame is largely that of public stupidity, but also that of the most widely circulated newspapers for keeping the public so stupid.

Christopher Sykes

A LATTER-DAY TRINITY

THIS book* could not have appeared at a more suitable moment. Originally published in the United States in 1948, it is now at last made available to the British public, just when the Soviet Government itself has gone out of its way to underline the topicality of the subject. In the circumstances even a less well-written biographical study of Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin would be bound to attract interest. Since Mr. Wolfe's book is also a work of scholarship (although lacking the usual critical apparatus, and in its style attuned to the taste of the average educated reader), the reviewer's task is for once made easy. Mr. Wolfe's qualifications as a historian have indeed been challenged by a colleague in a recent issue of the *American Slavic and East European Review*, but those who have read his spirited rejoinder to Mr. Marc Szeftel will not feel unduly worried by the admitted presence of a few minor inaccuracies; while for the general public this biographical triad is almost the ideal introduction to a topic whose fascination seems as unending as the political challenge that goes with it.

To avoid possible misunderstandings: this is not another history of the Russian Revolution, but a historical study of the men and movements leading up to it. It does indeed most regrettably stop short in 1914, on the eve of the First World War, and we shall have to await Mr. Wolfe's projected second volume to see what he makes of the subsequent careers of his protagonists. This drawback is, however, partly compensated for by a masterly introductory chapter which not only sketches in the background, but in some respects carries the story down to our day. It is characteristic of the author's insight into the essentials of the problem presented by Russia's constant oscillation between the European and the Asian elements in its make-up that he singles out that aspect of the dialectic which is currently causing so much concern to Mr. Khruschev and his colleagues:

> *And even within the soul of Stalinism will appear the same schizoid inner war: between the Stalin of the twenties and early thirties who imported foreign technicians and machines, and worshipped foreign technique, and defined "the style" of Leninism as "the harmonious union of Russian swing or sweep with American practicality in getting things done," and the Stalin of the forties who fears and denigrates everything foreign and purges people in every field for contact with, admiration for, or "slavish submission to" the West.*

These words almost qualify Mr. Wolfe for membership of the now fashionable school of post-Stalin optimists, but his general treatment of the subject is less complaisant to the illusions of our liberals. In any case his main theme is neither ancient Muscovy nor the present U.S.S.R., but the dissolution of the Petrine régime and the growth of the revolutionary movement in the late 19th and early 20th century. Here he clearly challenges comparison with Mr. Isaac Deutscher's work, especially in his

* *Three Who Made A Revolution*. By BERTRAM D. WOLFE. Thames and Hudson. 30s.

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analysis of Trotsky's personality and influence. Since Mr. Deutscher has not yet given us his volume on Lenin, while Mr. Wolfe's method commits him to a simultaneous account of Lenin's, Trotsky's, and Stalin's activities during their formative years, the comparison is not quite fair, but it is inevitable that it should be made. Aside from differences of style and manner—Mr. Wolfe is breezier than Mr. Deutscher, as befits an American—the contrast turns on differing views of the revolution. Mr. Wolfe is a democratic socialist, while Mr. Deutscher would probably not resent being described as an orthodox Leninist.

That having been said, it remains to be added that Mr. Wolfe's dislike of Bolshevism does not blind him to Lenin's greatness as a tactician, while his obvious admiration for Trotsky does not lead him to denigrate Stalin. He is indeed eminently fair and yet passionate in his judgments, a rare and attractive combination. And since his vivid biographical sketches are embedded in an historical account based on lengthy study of the original sources, he has little to fear from the specialists. The burden of scholarship is carried lightly, but here is no amateur historian writing for consumers of biographical romances. Indeed the virtual absence of notes and references gives the book a deceptively "popular" appearance. Some readers will regret this; few will suppose that it results from choice.

Apart from being both scholarly and eminently readable, what chiefly distinguishes this synthesis of history and biography is the author's familiarity with the outlook of the men (and women) who prepared the upheaval of 1917. Mr. Wolfe writes from the inside, which is something different from being in possession of inside information. At the same time his commitment to American democracy supplies a critical standard by which to judge the thoughts and acts of the revolutionaries—and of their opponents. This kind of balance is only possible for one who himself holds those democratic-socialist convictions which were among the chief casualties of the post-1917 upheaval. Although the present volume stops in 1914, it is clear that Mr. Wolfe views the Revolution essentially as a tragedy, and its protagonists as men fated to disappoint the illusions of their followers. Though often critical, he is seldom censorious, and his capacity for imaginative sympathy, coupled with his easy mastery of the sources, not only carries the reader along but helps him to relive the experiences of those pre-1914 revolutionaries who had so shrewd an understanding of their environment, and yet so little knowledge of the forces they were about to let loose.

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